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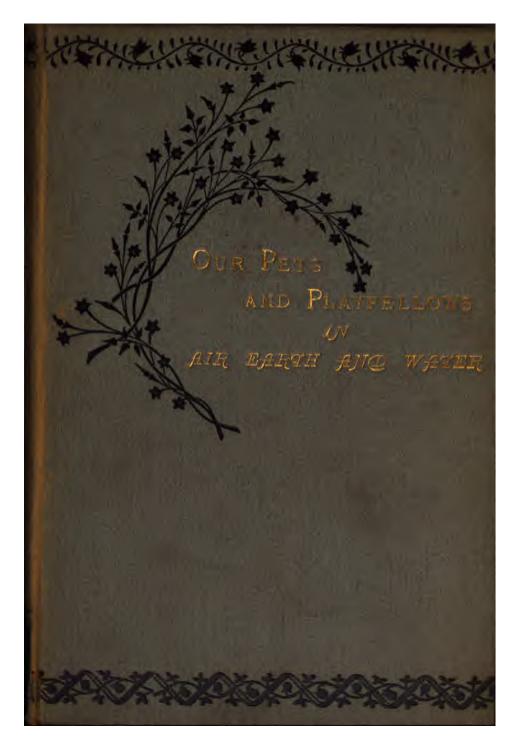
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OUR PETS AND PLAYFELLOWS.

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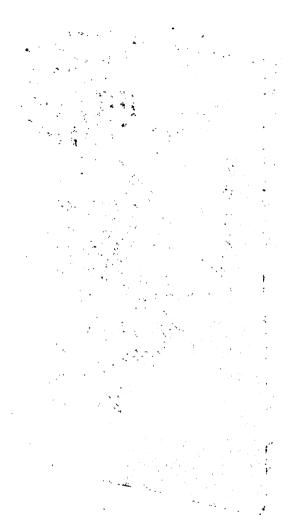
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OUR PETS AND PLAYFELLOWS

IN.

AIR EARTH AND WATER

BY

GERTRUDE PATMORE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY BERTHA PATMORE





LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS YORK STREET
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1880

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TO MY SISTER, BERTHA, who has known all and possessed many of the pets

WHOSE HISTORY THIS BOOK CONTAINS,

IT IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

SOME months ago I read, for about the sixth time, a book called "Live Toys, or Anecdotes of our four-legged and other Pets." It was given to us when we were quite little children, and has always been our favourite among a whole library of story-books.

As I came to the end of the last page and sat by the fire, thinking over the adventures of Neddy, the donkey, Drake, the brown retriever, the mischievous pony, Bluebeard, and all the other live toys that belonged to that little boy and girl, the thought occurred to me: what a pity it is that there are not more of such interesting, because true, stories; for almost anyone who has lived for some years in the country could write an amusing history of the manners and doings of their pet animals, which are sure to have been different from those of any others.

Then there passed before my mind a long succession of all the pets that have belonged to me and my brothers and sisters ever since I can remember anything. And the next thing that naturally suggested itself was, why should not I give as much pleasure to other children, by writing their history, as we have always received from this kind of tale? I took up the first pencil and piece of paper that came to hand, and began. This little book is the result of my trial.

As I wrote the story of each pet, it seemed to come to life again. The dogs swam about in the water, or made the woods echo with their joyful bark; the cats lay purring happily before the fire; the birds sang and made love to each other; the dormice nibbled their nuts, peeping shyly out of their soft, warm nests; and so on, down to my last and dearest pet, my beautiful Roy, who day after day had sat at my side, as I wrote, looking inquiringly at me when I laughed at some account I was giving of his misdemeanours, or stroked his soft head, telling him how I hoped that some day children, of whom we neither of us knew anything, would say: "How I should like to see that nice dog!" But before I had finished the story of his life, he lay cold and dead, far away in a beautiful wood, where he and his "little mistress" had had many a happy ramble together.

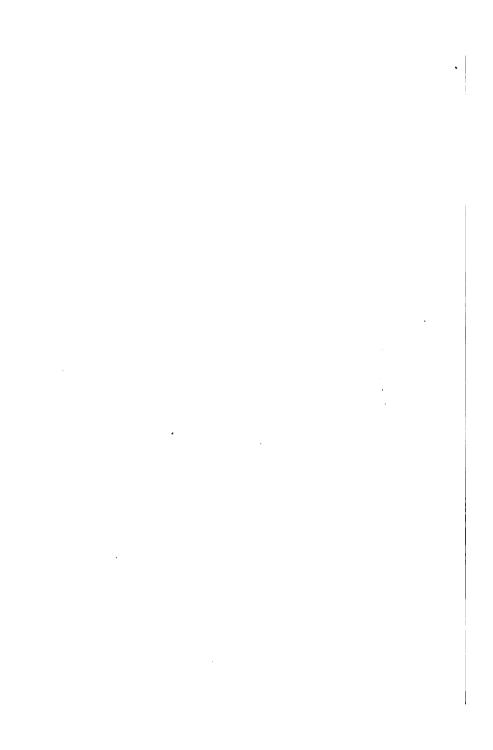
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OUR PETS AND PLAYFELLOWS.

CHAPTER I.

WOLF, FERDINAND, AND WALLACE.

I CAN just remember sitting one bright summer's day, when I was about four years old, on the back of a large dog, as he lay basking in the sun, and combing his soft black ears with my doll's comb. It was our great Newfoundland, Wolf, a splendid fellow with curly black-and-white hair, a long, bushy tail reaching nearly to the ground, and a kind, grave face.

I was so young when Wolf died, that I scarcely remember what he was like, but I have a photograph of him lying on a sofa, which shows what a handsome dog he must have been; and I have often heard my elder brothers and sisters talk about their dear old playfellow.

He was very gentle and good-tempered, especially with

children, and would let us play with him and pull him about, without showing the least impatience. time Wolf was very much dreaded by people who did not know him well, owing to exaggerated accounts of the following accident. One morning, as he and his master were out walking, they passed a girl, who stood near the door of a cottage, with a large piece of bread-and-butter in her hand. Wolf was accustomed to share all our meals, and perhaps thought the child was holding out the bread for him; anyhow, he jumped up to take it, and in so doing, scratched her face with his paw. The girl ran screaming into the house, thinking, no doubt, that the great dog meant to devour her as soon as he had finished her breakfast. My father followed, to know whether she was much hurt and to make up for Wolf's roughness. was met by the mother, who was very angry, and it took a great deal to pacify her, although her child had only a slight scratch on her cheek. At last she seemed contented, and poor Wolf followed his master home, little thinking what a bad name he had earned for himself. Soon afterwards, as my father was walking, accompanied as usual by Wolf, he heard a man remark in passing, to someone else: "That's the dog that bit the child." But his calumniators went even farther than this; for another time, as he and his master went past the country omnibus, the conductor pointed him out to the passengers, exclaiming: "There's the dog that killed the child!"

Wolf was also once, though quite unintentionally, the cause of great alarm to a rather timid friend of my father's. They were sitting together in the study, talking, when the door was pushed open a very little way, and the gentleman turning round, saw a pair of bright eyes gleaming through the chink. My father, seeing that he was frightened, said: "It's only Wolf." But this made matters worse, for the poor man now thought that we had acquired a new pet, in the shape of a tame wolf. He was not reassured until the great dog ran in, and wagging his tail in welcome to his master's visitor, lay down quietly at his feet.

Wolf had, like some other dogs I have heard of, a great dislike to mournful music. If a piece was played in a major key, he would lie and sleep quite happily, but directly it turned to a minor, he roused himself and set up a succession of dismal howls that quite drowned the notes of the piano.

He must have been very strong, for my little brother and I used to ride about the garden on him, and he could even bear the weight of a full-grown man.

He was, of course, very fond of water, and enjoyed nothing better than swimming in a large pond near our house. It was often noticed, that when following a carriage in the country, he left it at the sight of a farm pond by the road-side, and was not seen again during the drive. Some hours later he would return home, wet

through and very tired, as though with a great deal of running or swimming. For some time no one could imagine how he amused himself during these long absences. But one day a farmer came to claim damages from my father for some ducks that his dog had that morning killed. He had been seen to jump into the water and hunt a large duck, which seemed likely to escape, for it could swim faster and turn more easily than its pursuer; and whenever he did succeed in catching it up, and opened his great jaws ready to take it in, the bird dived suddenly beneath the water and reappeared behind him, or in another part of the pond. But Wolf was not to be discouraged. He coolly followed it up and down and round and round the pond for nearly an hour, until it was exhausted, and he was at last able to catch it. It was soon discovered that this was not the first time that he had indulged in this expensive amusement, nor did it prove to be the last. I think he must have done it chiefly for the fun of the chase, for he generally buried the birds in the mud at the water's edge, after he had killed them, and came back to eat them another time.

At last, one day, when Wolf was returning from the middle of a pond with a stick that had been thrown in for him, he was seized with the cramp, and not being able to swim to shore, went down after a few struggles.

Soon after Wolf's death, my father bought two very

handsome dogs at a dog-show, to whom we gave the names of Ferdinand and Wallace.

Ferdinand was a Newfoundland, very like Wolf in size and form, but not in colour, for his coat was of a rich dark brown with white patches. He was a most beautiful dog, with a noble head and soft, melancholy eyes; and I am sure he would have become a great favourite if we had had him for a longer time. When he came to us, he was evidently suffering either from the bad air and confinement during the show, or from sorrow at leaving his former master. He never recovered his health or spirits, but pined away and died in a few weeks. After he had been with us two or three days, I was being led round the garden on my brother's pony; there was no saddle on its back, and as I passed the corner in which Ferdinand's kennel stood, I slipped off and fell to the ground. The dog, much to my terror, immediately caught me up by my frock and shook me as if I had been a rat; but my father soon rescued me quite unhurt from his great jaws.

Wallace, who was a fine fawn-coloured bloodhound mastiff, lived longer with us than Ferdinand, but never became much of a pet; for he was so fierce, and, what was worse, so treacherous, that we were forbidden even to touch him, and I think we were too much afraid of him to wish to do so. The only person who could manage him at all was the coachman, who used to give him his food, and took him for a walk every day. Though

Wallace was such a dangerous dog when tied up to his kennel, and once even flew at his keeper without provocation, he was as harmless as a lamb when loose in the garden or on the roads, and though he had a muzzle which he was supposed to wear during his walks, I believe it generally went into the man's pocket soon after they started from the door, and remained there until their return.

Wallace's treachery was not confined to his dealings with human beings. He liked nothing better for his dinner than a tender young chicken, and was very cunning in his way of procuring it. He would lie perfectly motionless in his kennel, letting the fowls gather round to peck up the leavings of his meals. When they were quite within his reach and did not suspect any danger, he suddenly dashed out, and seizing hold of a nice fat one, on which he had fixed his eye, quietly retired into his kennel and devoured it.

One day, when Wallace was loose in the stable-yard at the back of the house, my father and mother passed through it to go out for a walk, and he proposed to be of the party. But as they did not wish for his company, they shut the gate and walked on. When they came back, the great handsome dog was lying on the top of the courtyard-wall, which was about eight feet high, looking down with complacency on the passers-by. He had evidently made the leap with the intention of follow-

ing his master and mistress, but finding himself there, either was afraid to jump down, or found his new and commanding position so agreeable, that he was loth to leave it.

As he was not considered a safe dog to have where there were so many children, Wallace was given to a gentleman who wanted a good watch-dog. After he left us, we heard most dreadful stories of his conduct in that capacity, which were, I hope, not all true.

CHAPTER II.

FOREIGN BIRDS.

ERDINAND and Wallace were not our only pets at this time. We had, besides, a large cage, containing all the rarest and most beautiful birds that my father could buy in London. Many a time when he came home, he excited our curiosity by taking out of his pocket a paper bag with something moving in it, which, when it was opened at the door of the cage, turned out to be a lovely foreign bird that we had never seen before. The poor little thing would flutter very timidly out of its dark retreat, no doubt puzzled by the light and the number of its strange companions. Whether they would prove its friends or foes could not be discovered until the next day, as they were all settled for the night when the new one came among them.

The cage was very large, and had two sliding partitions that could be put in, to separate any birds that did not agree well together. Fortunately, most of them were quite peaceful, or I do not know how they would have been managed, for there were between fifty and sixty living together.

It was a beautiful and interesting sight, this large family

of feathered pets, for besides the brilliance and variety of their plumage, their ways were very amusing. the largest was a Virginian nightingale, a fine scarlet bird with a bold crest. His song was clear and rich, and quite as beautiful, we all thought, as that of his English name-He had a charming way of pausing in the middle. to give a delighted purr, at the same time raising his fine crest and looking so kind and happy, that one could not help loving him. As soon as he found himself among the little tropical birds, he voluntarily undertook the office of universal father, and at night spread out his wings like a hen over her chickens, so that they might nestle together under them. It was quite lovely to see a pair of the tiny things peeping from their snug covert on either side of him every evening at roosting time. The smallest birds were a pair of avadavats, chiefly brown, with fine wavy dark lines on their feathers. They were so small, that they sometimes squeezed themselves out between the close brass wires of the cage, and frequently hopped into the seed-troughs to feed, instead of only putting their heads through the round hole, as the others did. When the Virginian nightingale came down for his dinner and found the box occupied by one of his adopted children, he would stand before it for a minute or two, turning his head gently from side to side, as if considering, then jump back to his high perch and wait patiently until the little one's hunger was satisfied.

The cardinal, a rather large grey-and-black bird with red head and legs, had a very inferior character. At first he was kind to his small companions, but soon quite forgot his good conduct and took to fighting them. But he was not nearly as quarrelsome as the bishops, sprightly birds rather smaller than canaries, and gorgeously clad in rich orange with a black band across their breast. Their pert crest and pointed beak gave them a spiteful appearance; they were by far the most troublesome of all the birds, and had to be nearly always shut into one division by themselves. The Java sparrows were more amusing than beautiful. They had grey backs, pinkish breasts, blunt, waxy-looking bills, black heads and white collars, which so exactly resembled a clergyman's old-fashioned "stickup," that they went by the name of the "parsons." They were very dull, grave-looking birds, but their conduct was a serious trial of gravity to anyone who watched them. They used to stand side by side performing a slow dance, first one giving an awkward little hop and then the other; as one went up, the other went down, always in time, and accompanying each jump by a funny little shriek. day when my father was ill in bed the Java sparrows were taken up and let loose in his room. They perched on the narrow ledge across the window and began to do their best for his amusement, by performing their odd hop dance, with regular monotonous shrieks and whistles; the whole time looking so grave and business-like, that he went into fits of laughter, which, he has always declared, quite cured his illness.

The tenants of our cage were a very noisy set, for besides the good singers, there were three sorts of parrots with loud voices, and all the others had different chirrups or screams. There were some Australian grass-parakeets, who reminded us of sailors, as they climbed about the wires of the cage whistling shrilly. They were rather fond of sitting on a perch below some of the other birds, and pecking mischievously at their feet. There was also a dear little turquoise parakeet and a pair of love-birds. The spice-birds were small speckled creatures about as large as wrens. The little cock's warble was so soft and low as to be scarcely audible, and it was very funny to watch his mate's endeavours to hear it among the chorus of loud voices. She sidled up to him, and, standing on tiptoe, put her ear close to his beak, then seeming quite contented, and indifferent to all that was going on around.

The rest of the birds were remarkable for nothing but their plumage, so I will only mention the name and colours of those I remember. A Madagascar bishop, a rather large crimson-and-black bird. A pair of wax-bills, dark grey speckled with white, and a crimson wash on their breast and beak. A pair of North American bluebirds, all dark blue. A pair of South American bluebirds, with light grey backs and wings, cobalt blue breasts and pink cheeks. A pair of Australian sparrows, very

dark grey covered with small white spots and a band of crimson across their tails. A dark brown whidah-bird, with two long drooping black feathers in its tail, from which we always supposed its name to be the "widow"-bird; and a nonpareil, whose plumage contained all the colours of the rainbow.

The cage generally stood in the dining-room, but on bright warm days it was often put down on the grass in the sunshine. This was a great treat for the little tropical birds, who used to hop about and chirrup twice as happily as when in the comparatively dark room. One morning when we were all sitting near the cage on the lawn, my mother suddenly exclaimed: "One of the birds is out!" We soon saw, however, that it was not one of our birds, but a strange linnet that was sitting on the top, twittering and looking down at the little foreigners as if he would very much like to be with them. A small cage was at once fetched, and my father put it very gently on the other, hoping that the linnet might take it for part of the big one and hop in. To our great delight he did so directly, and the door was at once closed. He must have been a tame linnet that had flown away from his home, for when he was put in with the other birds, he seemed quite contented; and as we never found out to whom he belonged, he stayed with them for the rest of his life, or rather of their lives, for being of a stronger constitution than the foreign birds, he outlived them all and spent his last years in a small cage by himself.

One bird that was for a short time in the aviary was a great pet. It was a piping bullfinch that was given to my mother as a birthday present. Bully was very tame, and used to fly about the room every morning, settling now and then upon somebody's head; but he loved his mistress much more than anyone else, and was never so happy as when perched on her shoulder, piping his little song or pecking seeds from her lips. He once showed his love for her in a very pretty way. She had spent several days away from home, which made poor Bully very dull and sad; and returning late one evening, long after children and birds had shut their eyes for the night, went into the room and spoke to him. Bully woke up, and was so delighted at the sight of his mistress, that he at once began piping his tune in joyful welcome to her. The poor little bird had a sad end. It is, I believe, a well-known fact that bullfinches often die of grief or jealousy; but we did not know it at the time; and when we had the large cage of birds, our pretty bright Bully was put into it. He was so much vexed at seeing them share his mistress's attention, that he sickened and died in a few days.

Some years later we had another bullfinch of whom we were also very fond. His song was a pretty German air which he piped quite easily, until he came to a very high note that he found great difficulty in whistling. Poor Bully (for he too went by this ugly but traditional name for birds of his kind) tried very hard, puffing out his

feathers, and straining his little throat to get it out; but very often in vain; and then he proceeded to scold and swear at himself most vehemently. Soon he would go back to the beginning, and when the troublesome note came, or rather did not come, he again broke off and flew into a furious passion. This he did several times, until the difficult passage was at last mastered, when he finished his song, winding up with a delighted chuckle.

BULLY'S SONG.



We could never quite make out whether Bully's vexation at his failure was natural, or whether he was only imitating to the best of his power the impatient exclamations of the man who had taught him to pipe, and found it difficult to make him reach the high note; but it was, I should think, most likely the latter, as he used also to make a strange confused noise which was evidently an imitation of the simultaneous songs and screams of all the birds that had been with him in the shop before he came to us.

While we still had all the small birds, my father bought another of a very different kind—an enormous macaw. He measured about four feet six from his beak to the tip of his tail, and was much finer than any we could see in the Zoological Gardens. His plumage was very bright, being mostly of a gaudy red and blue, with a few green and vellow feathers. None of us children cared much for him, as he was rather fond of pecking our fingers with his great strong beak. He used also to frighten us by shaking his chain in the middle of the night, when all was quiet in the house, which recalled—to my mind, at least all the dreadful stories I had ever heard of hobgoblins dragging along their chained limbs in deserted galleries at midnight. But notwithstanding our fear of the great bird, we used to summon up courage every morning to make a dart at his tray for the beautiful feathers which generally lay there, especially in the moulting time.

I have heard of very talkative parrots speaking quite sensibly now and then, but I think that the case of our "Mac" was still more extraordinary; for he was only known to speak three times during the year that we had him, and on each of these occasions it was quite to the purpose. Once when he was given his usual meal of bread soaked

in water, being hungry, he dipped his beak into the tin in too great a hurry, and as the sop was hot, burnt himself. He soon drew back his head, and turning it away as though in great disgust, exclaimed: "O—o—h l—a—a!"

My mother was one day standing near his perch when he began shrieking in a deafening manner, which he was rather fond of doing. She told him to be quiet, and as he did not obey, touched him lightly with her parasol, whereupon Mac, flapping his great wings to and fro, screamed out quite plainly: "Mother! Mother!"

The third time that he exhibited his power of speech was still more remarkable: one of the dogs, coming into the hall in which Mac's perch stood, saw the tin of food down on the tray, and began to empty it. But Mac soon put an end to his feast by seizing hold of his tail and giving it a sharp bite. As the poor dog, when his tail was released, ran howling away, the parrot triumphantly ejaculated: "Pretty well! Pretty well!"

Mac being found too noisy for us, was sent to a birdfancier, to be exchanged for some other birds, and my father received in place of him, a peacock, two pea-hens, and a pair of swans. At the same time, the great cage full of birds was given to a friend who did not find time to bestow as much care on them as they had always received from my mother, and before many months they were all dead, excepting the linnet.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN AND PILOT.

A FTER Wallace was sent away, we had no more dogs until about a year later, when my father bought two, to act as watch-dogs, and to take out shooting with him. Their names were Captain and Pilot.

Captain was a curly brown retriever with light yellowish eyes, which had not that deep, intelligent look that is the great beauty of most large dogs, but they had a goodnatured, merry expression; and he was very good-tempered, though not particularly clever. Captain belonged to one of my elder brothers, and he and his young master were great friends; I have seen them lying comfortably together in the dog's kennel, which was just large enough to hold them both. We once went on a blackberrying expedition in which he made himself as busy, though hardly as useful, as the rest of the party; he followed his master from bush to bush, and did his best to help him, by picking whole bunches of berries, ripe and unripe together, which, however, scarcely mattered, as he swallowed them whole on the spot, instead of adding them to our store in the baskets.

But though gentle and good-tempered with his human friends, Captain was by no means so pleasant a companion to other dogs. His great rival and enemy, Pilot, was a very handsome black retriever with soft glossy hair and a splendid head, and an expression full of affection and intelligence. In our eyes his beauty was enhanced by his having a little white on his chest; but I believe that a pure retriever ought not to have a single white hair on his body.

Captain and Pilot had a great many furious fights, for they were well matched in size and strength, and neither would give in, though both generally bore away serious marks of the combat. At last, when his young master left home to go to school, Captain was sent away to a gentleman who lived a few miles off; but, unfortunately, he knew the way back, and often returned by himself, when there was sure to be a battle between him and his old adversary.

Pilot was a capital house-dog, which was very fortunate, as we lived far from any village and quite out of hearing from the nearest cottage. He had two distinct barks, one of which meant that he knew of, or apprehended some danger; the other being only a sign of joy or sorrow as the case might be. One night my father was awakened by a furious barking and growling, and as he knew by Pilot's voice that he must have heard or seen some one near the house, he got up, and taking his pistols, went

out and unchained the dog. But he was too late, for though he could see by Pilot's manner of sniffing about the plantations, that a poacher, or some other trespasser, had been through them, the search was in vain, and the poor dog, having hunted about in every corner, had to give it up. This troubled him, and he stood by his master for a few seconds, irresolute as to what step he should next take. Then he darted away up the drive, and in three or four minutes returned, dragging along the tallest pole that he could find in the hop-garden, which was about a quarter of a mile off. Laying this at his master's feet, he looked up into his face as though he would say: "I could not find the poacher you wanted, but you often tell me to fetch big sticks, so I thought that this would be the next best thing to bring you."

Pilot was very fond of going into the water, and as we had several large ponds, he was able to get plenty of swimming. His jaws must have been very strong: he could fetch out and drag along great trunks of wood, which my father could not lift, but only roll in for him. His great ambition was at one time to bring to his master a large tree that had stood near the edge of a pond, and being felled, had fallen into the water. He swam up to it day after day, and pulled and tugged and pushed; but though he could move the tree to the bank, all his efforts to get it on to dry land were, of course, in vain. If a pointed stake were thrown into the water, so as to stick

in the mud at the bottom, he felt about near the place where it had disappeared with his hind legs, and when he touched it, dived down quite out of sight, returning in a few moments with it in his mouth. He was very fond of fish, and would, if he had the chance, dip into a deep can of water in which there were live ones, and, bringing one out, swallow it nearly whole.

Pilot carried things well, and often made himself useful in this way; for instance, he would carry his master's hand-bag, weighing six or seven pounds, to the station, which was four miles off. When any of our pets died, we used to have a grand burial ceremony, with a coffin, flowers, and a funeral procession. Pilot was sometimes chief mourner, and carried a basket of flowers to be arranged on the coffin before throwing the earth over it. He walked demurely in his place and never upset his basket, but seemed quite well to know what was required of him on such a solemn occasion.

He was always perfectly obedient to my father, and very fond of him, though he did not show much respect or affection to anyone else. His master used sometimes to make him sit on a stone pedestal at the end of a low wall near the house, with a good dinner of bones before him, which he was told not to eat; if he was left quite alone for half an hour, at the end of that time he would be sitting in the same position with the food untouched. He had a great dislike to anyone who was shabbily dressed,

and if a beggar came to the house, Pilot, if he was loose, was sure to fly at him and add several new rents to the poor man's rags. One of his favourite amusements was rat-catching. When the corn was thrashed, he was always taken to the farm, as dozens of the poor creatures would then be frightened out of their homes under the stacks. One day he killed more than fifty, and ate a large proportion of them. But these rat-feasts did not agree with him; his head used to swell, and he was sometimes quite blind for several days after indulging in them.

Not long after Captain went away, a friend made us a present of a young dog of the same kind as Pilot, and the vexation and sorrow of having another rival changed the poor old dog very much. He was so jealous of the newcomer, who seemed to him to usurp his place, that he took quite a dislike to his master and to everyone else, excepting the coachman, choosing him now for his patron and friend. The man returned Pilot's affection, and when he left us a few months later, was allowed to take the poor dog, who was by this time very old and bad-tempered.

But before Pilot went away, he made Carlo, the new dog, aware of the bad opinion he entertained of him, by flying at him whenever he had the chance. We did our best to keep them apart; but they were sometimes let loose together, and then they were almost sure to fight. In these battles Pilot generally had the advantage, as the coachman always took his part. This was rather hard on

poor Carlo, who was a very peaceful dog and would never have injured Pilot, if left to himself. One day they met near the edge of a pond, and after a few threatening snarls and growls, sprang at each other and began a furious fight. Pilot was badly off this time, as his ally was not at hand, and Carlo was fast getting the mastery over him, when, fortunately for the poor old dog, they rolled over together into the water, and not being able to continue the struggle under the circumstances, separated and swam to shore. Carlo at once allowed himself to be chained up, but Pilot ran off and tore up the avenue to the lodge where the coachman lived. Here he stopped and stood whining at the door, until his friend came out to him. The cunning dog then enticed the man, who of course knew nothing of what had happened, down to the house, and going straight round to Carlo's kennel, flew at him, confident of victory, now that his reserve force was at hand. hopes proved to be well founded, for the coachman went to the rescue, and, taking it for granted that his favourite was in the right, bestowed all his blows on Carlo, who was chained to his kennel and quite innocent of any warlike intentions.

As these fights became very frequent, we were not sorry to part with poor old Pilot; for we knew he was likely to spend his last days more happily than he would have done if he had continued to share his old home with Carlo, whom he considered as a new and undeserving favourite.





"WITH HIS LITTLE BRIGHT HEAD TUCKED SO TIGHT BETWEEN HIS FEET."

CHAPTER IV.

LOUIE. THE DORMICE.

BEFORE I speak of Carlo, I must mention some other pets that we had before he came to us.

Our great ambition had always been to have a lamb for a pet, and my father, to our great delight, had promised Emily and me that we should each have one. There were two nice, healthy little lambs at the farm, which were to be sent to us as soon as they could leave their mother. Unfortunately, on the morning of the very day that they were to come to us, mine killed himself, by twisting the cord with which he was tied round the stake until he was strangled. So the other was sent by himself in the evening. It was rather late when he arrived, and none of us went to see him, excepting his mistress; but we could hear him bleating in one of the out-houses during the night, and of course we were very anxious next morning to make the acquaintance of our new pet. We were told that he had been tied to an apple-tree in the orchard, and, as soon as breakfast was over, all rushed out, expecting to see a rather small sheep grazing under the tree; but what was our surprise, when we saw a tiny thing about the size of a cat pulling at his cord, to get at us, among the long grass which nearly hid him. He baaed and danced about with delight when we petted him, and seemed to recognize his mistress, though he had only seen her once before, and to prefer her attentions to those of anyone. He was so young that he could not eat, so we gave him milk in a bottle, at which he sucked eagerly, standing with his front feet on Emily's knee, and his woolly tail wagging as fast as possible. She gave him the name of Louie, and soon became very fond of him. He used to follow her like a dog, and gambol about at her side in the prettiest manner. He would throw up his hind legs until he went nearly head over heels, and galloping some way off, come scampering back with his head down, pretending to butt at her. Louie always loved his mistress very much, and was rather fond of me, but he did not like Bertha or Henry, and used often to show this by running at them, and trying to knock them down. I think they sometimes teazed him a little, for the sake of seeing him get angry. But as Louie grew older, his butting became more serious, and he sometimes nearly threw us down in his rough play. At last he became so violent, that we were afraid to go near him; and when his mistress, who was the only person that could keep him in order, went abroad for a time, poor Louie was turned into a field with the other sheep. He was very unhappy, and walked sorrowfully up and down, trying to get out and come to us. But if we went into the field to him, he rushed at us with his head down, and wanted to have one of his rough games; so we had to leave him to get used to his new life and strange companions as best he could.

Poor Louie! When Emily came home some months later, he was shut up in a fold with some other sheep; he recognized her, and tried hard to break out, and come to her; but it would only have made him more unhappy and discontented, if he had been noticed and petted again. Soon afterwards he disappeared, and we have since had horrible suspicions of his fate.

Sometimes when I ask people whether they ever had a tame dormouse, they answer with a shudder: "Oh dear, no!" It then turns out that they have never seen one; but think, because they dislike common mice and rats, that these must also be disagreeable animals; and are quite surprised to hear that they are not really mice, but belong to the squirrel tribe. They were always great favourites with us, and we have had a long succession of them as pets ever since we were babies. What can be prettier than the fat round little things, with their soft, red-brown hair, long furry tails, white chests, and great black eyes?

Bertha tells me, that the first thing she can remember doing in her whole life is running about the room tossing her pinafore up and down, to the great delight, as she supposed, of a dormouse who was in it; and then suddenly seeing him clambering up the table-cloth at the other side of the room. I think it must have been about this dormouse that these verses were written:

THE DORMOUSE.

Bertha had a dormouse,

You never saw a prettier pet;
In its little warm house,

Trying where its nose could get.

For it pleased him much best
If he could, to hide his face;
Then he sank in such rest,
Squeezed up in the darkest place.

Rest that wanted no food
All the winter, night and day.
Bertha call'd him so good,
Because he never ran away.

Bertha thought him quite dead
When she saw him fast asleep,
With his little bright head
Tuck'd so tight between his feet.

Roll'd up in a round ball,

All his back was stiff and cold

Underneath she found all
Just as stiff and tightly roll'd.

Tiny legs and pink feet,
Bushy tail and lively head,
All she used to think sweet
Crumpled up, and cold and dead.

Tears so hot and bright fell
While she warm'd her little dear,
Till he stretch'd out quite well,
Thinking summer-time was here.

For when summer came round,

Little dormouse woke and play'd;

Yet he was so tame found,

No one was of him afraid.

Often through her gold hair,

Bertha let him climb and run;

And since it was not cold there,

Dormouse grew quite wild with fun.

Next, upon her small thumb,

He would eat, and clean his face;

Then he'd last of all come

Back to find his sleeping place.

First a pretty thin foot
Gently lifted up the lid;
Then his nose was in put,
Lastly, down his body slid.

Thus the pet his days spent:
Sometimes sleeping, cold and dead,
Sometimes in amazement
Frisking through a golden head.

Who'd not have a dormouse,

Little tame and gentle pet,

Creeping to his warm house,

Trying where his nose could get?

The first dormouse that I can remember was one called Mouffette. He also belonged to Bertha. He was so tame that she used to put him in a doll's cart, with a tiny whip in one hand and the reins in the other, and draw it round the garden; and she often walked about out of doors with the little thing on her shoulder. Another was very fond of cream, though it was said to be bad for his health, and was sometimes allowed to drink it out of a tiny ivory cup that he held in his hand.

At one time, when both my sisters had a dormouse, my father said that whichever of them learned first to work a

shirt front very nicely, should have a beautiful new cage for their pet. Unfortunately, Emily's "Bear" had two days before got loose, and ran up the bed-room chimney, and since then nothing had been seen or heard of him; so she was very unhappy, thinking that if she did get a new cage, there would be no dormouse to put in it. However, that evening, as they were going to bed, they heard a little noise in the chimney, and presently, down walked master Bear into his cage, which had been placed on the hob, and began to eat his nuts.

A good many years later we had another dormouse, who used to spend a great part of his time in his mistress's pocket. One day, she took him out with her when she went for a drive. She had had him in her hand, but when she got out at the door, slipped him into her pocket, thinking no more of him until she had taken off her hat and come down stairs. Then she suddenly remembered Mousey, and felt in her pocket, but he was not there. Everybody began to search for him, my father and the coachman outside the door by the light of a lantern (for it was by this time dark), and we, in every corner of the hall, passages, and bed-room, but in vain; and after another fruitless search in the morning, we gave up poor Mousey as lost, thinking that he must have fallen to the ground at the door and run away. The next night, as his mistress was lying awake, her eyes fell on a chair that stood near the bed, and which she could just see by the

glimmer of a night-light that was burning in the room. On the back of the chair was a small dark object: as her eyes became more accustomed to the light, she saw that the small dark thing was staring at her with a pair of large black eyes-like the Marquis of Montrose. Mousey's bright eyes had betrayed him, and he was at once captured, and put into closer confinement. He must have come out of her pocket with her handkerchief, and have hidden himself somewhere in the room while we were seeking him. Another time, his mistress left him in a drawer of her wardrobe while she was out walking; when she came back and opened the drawer, there was Mousey sitting on his hind legs in the middle of her new black silk dress, looking triumphantly at a little heap of nibbled silk that lav before him.

Some time after this dormouse's death, Bertha had one who was a great beauty. His whole coat was very fine and richly coloured; but the most remarkable thing about him was his tail; it had a white tip, which we had never before seen in a dormouse, and the hairs were so long and thick that it looked quite bushy, and measured at least half an inch across. He was not so tame as many that we had had before, but he would sit quietly in his mistress's hand eating a strawberry, and let himself be stroked. This poor little mouse went through a long and painful trial—he had his picture painted. Day after day he had to come out of his warm dark nest in the cage, and sit for an hour

or more together on a damp mossy stump in broad day-He was very good and quiet for the greater part of light. the time, though, whenever any noise startled him, he disappeared as fast as his little feet could carry him into the dark crevice which was supposed to be his home, where he and his mate lived together. He must have been very glad when his trial of patience was over for the day, and his cage was held near the stump for him to run He used to go straight through his "sitting-room" to the little dark "bed-room," where we could see through the small round hole that he always washed his face and hands diligently for two or three minutes (the former as a cat does, the latter by rubbing them together after the fashion of a human being), curled himself up with his tail over his eyes, shut them, and fell asleep. For some time we feared that poor Mousey was going to pay dearly for the honour of having his portrait exhibited in the Royal Academy, for he caught a cold or suffered in some other way by his daily exposure, and grew thinner and weaker every day. We had never known a dormouse recover from an illness, and quite expected to lose our pet. But a friend fortunately suggested a small dose of castor oil, which she had found succeed with her own. and it was quite a success. Mousey recovered fast, and · was soon as well as ever. But a few weeks later, he was found lying cold and stiff in his nest. He was put into a match-box covered with light blue velvet, with cotton

wool and small flowers round him, and mournfully consigned to his grave under an evergreen-oak.

We were, as usual, not long without a dormouse, and the next had also to submit to having his portrait taken. But after our experience with the last, we took greater care of him, and he always had a small mat of black silk to sit on. It was at a warmer season, and he was painted under a strawberry plant, with a fine large strawberry between his paws, at which he could nibble whenever he felt hungry, so he was none the worse for his sittings, but soon afterwards grew so fat, that he is at present the largest dormouse we have ever had.

My father once had a dormouse who lived on the ink-stand on his study-table, and used sometimes to take a little sip of ink out of the bottle, which did not seem to hurt him.

There were a great many wild dormice in the woods, and we sometimes came upon their nests—soft round balls of dry grass just large enough for them to creep into. Bertha once found a little mother-mouse in her nest, and caught and nursed her for a minute or two, and then put her down to run back to it. They were very fond of a certain mossy bank covered with underwood, near one of the ponds. My mother used to go and sit there with her book, putting some strawberries near her on the ground. Presently she would hear a tiny rustling among the dry leaves, and a little dormouse would creep up to one of

the strawberries, and holding it between his front paws, begin to nibble at it, keeping his large eyes fixed on her face.

The gardener once brought us in a nest which he had found in a hedge, containing a mother dormouse and her six young ones, little things about the size of hazelnuts, with scarcely any hair on their bodies. When they were old enough to leave their mother, they were all given away; but we kept her, and she became a great pet.

CHAPTER V.

CATS AND KITTENS. THE PONY.

7E once found in a barn at the farm, an old cat with a large family, of which we only kept one, a prettily-marked tortoise-shell, with a white chest. while she was still quite small, Pilot saw her playing about in a yard; and taking her perhaps for some kind of rat, caught the little thing up in his mouth, and would no doubt have killed her, had not the mother come to the rescue. She jumped boldly on to his head, and there used her claws and teeth to such advantage, that Pilot was obliged to drop his prey in order to free himself from her clutches. The poor kitten never recovered this treatment, and her temper was from that time so bad, that she received the name of "Crosspatch," and went by it until the day of her death. I think it was partly that her spine had been injured, for she used always to growl and spit fiercely if she was lifted up by her shoulders, which most cats prefer to being taken hold of by the skin of their necks.

But though Crosspatch was so unamiable in her conduct to everyone else, she never showed the least bad temper to my mother, but would crawl up on to her lap

whenever she had a chance, and sit there enjoying her mistress's caresses, and purring quite happily. If she wanted milk or food when we were having meals, she used to go and pat my mother's hand in the gentlest manner with her paw.

I was once standing at a bed-room window on the first floor, petting Crosspatch who sat on the window-sill, when my mother passed beneath: in a second the cat had disappeared. I looked down, and there she was, walking calmly by the side of her mistress on the lawn, having jumped some sixteen or eighteen feet.

One day when Henry was standing in the yard at the back of the house, the poor cat came up to him mewing and trying to make him understand her complaints; he could not think what she wanted, but tried to comfort her. Next time he passed that way she came to him again crying piteously, and walking a little way off, every now and then looked back with a beseeching "mew." He did not find out what she had wanted, until going a day or two later into an out-house where the firewood was kept, he saw, lying behind some heavy logs, a tiny kitten. He moved the wood and took it up, but it was quite cold and dead. While Crosspatch was away getting food for herself, the logs of wood must have been disturbed, so that when she came back she could not get at her little son to feed him. She had, no doubt, meant to call Henry to her assistance, but did not succeed until it

was too late. Crosspatch had several kittens who lived to become great pets, especially one which we called Kittykins. He was a pretty tabby, and had plenty of good-temper to make up for his mother's want of it. Crosspatch used to follow us about out of doors like a dog, and when Kittykins was old enough he came too; but during these walks was kept in strict order by his mother. She did not like him to wander off the path in the wood, and if he did so she would always follow him, and bring him back with a sharp box on his ears.

One day Emily brought in a poor little fluffy bantam chicken that had hurt its leg and wanted nursing. It was taken to the kitchen where it soon made friends with the kitten; they fed from the same plate, sat side by side before the fire, and slept together in a basket at night. The chicken was very fond of Emily, and when she went through the kitchen, used to hop after her, squeaking with its mouth wide open. If, in doing this, it got in his way, or did anything else that he did not approve of, Kitty, remembering his mother's wholesome lessons, used to box the little bantam's ears. But when poor Kittykins was older, and, as he no doubt thought wiser, he wandered away by himself to the woods and never returned, having been, I suppose, either shot, or caught in a poacher's trap. In this way we lost several of our cats.

A cat that belonged to the coachman had a very curious way of bringing up her kittens. Soon after her

first family was born, she disappeared one morning with all the little things, and could not be seen anywhere. In the evening she came in for food, but as soon as she had had enough, ran away again. I think it was the next morning that one of the kittens was found lying under a large tree in the drive, and it was then discovered that the mother had taken her favourite children up to where two branches separating, formed a kind of nest for them, leaving the one poor little thing that she did not care for down below to shift for himself. Strange to say, she and the rest of her family remained safely up in the tree until they were old enough to run about, when she got them all down again. I do not remember whether the little castaway was ever taken into favour and allowed to share his brother's airy home, but I think not. She found this plan succeed so well with her first set of kittens, that she followed it with all the others.

A rather strange thing once happened to an ugly sandy-coloured cat that lived chiefly in the stables. The coachman found her one morning in a most pitiful state, hopping about on three legs, with the fourth hanging down quite limp, and apparently useless. He took her up, and after examining it, felt quite sure that it was broken; and calling the gardener, asked his opinion, which was the same. They were both very sorry for the poor creature, and decided that she had better be killed, as she seemed to be in great pain, and would most likely never get

better. Just then the bailiff passed, and wanted to know upon what they were holding such a grave discussion. They told him, and after feeling the paw very carefully, he came to the same conclusion about the injury. "But," said he, "you need not kill poor Pussy, I will try and cure her." So he took her into the kitchen, and cut some little wooden splints. While he held her quiet, the housekeeper bound the leg carefully up between the splints with tape, which was then securely sewn, and poor Pussy was put to bed with a great deal of petting, and plenty of food. About two hours later, she was found walking about firmly on her four legs, with no signs of the bandage that had been on her paw, and was never seen to limp again.

We once had a present of two white kittens; they were the prettiest little things imaginable, as white as snow and as soft as balls of cotton-wool. They came one evening in a basket, and as soon as they were taken out of it, sat on my lap romping and playing together, not at all disconcerted at finding themselves in a strange place without their mother. But suddenly they stopped their play, their eyes shut, and in a minute they were both fast asleep, lying back with their paws raised in the act of patting each other. They used to sleep in the stable, and were named by the coachman. One of them he called, I suppose from its playfulness, "Oh-be-joyful," and the other, because it was fond of escaping when he wanted to shut it up,

"Slippery Dick." But we shortened these curious names, and called them Oby and Dick. One evening we looked through the stable window, to see whether they were comfortable and happy, and saw the two little white pets sitting side by side on the back of a black carriage horse. We soon found out that they always spent the night in this way, their great companion not at all objecting. Before they were yet quite grown into cats they both disappeared in the woods, one a few weeks after the other.

At one time we had a very nice pony who was called "Felix," after the black pony in Miss Edgeworth's "Frank;" but our Felix was white. He used to draw a basket-carriage, and we sometimes rode him in our own fields. The drive and back road together made a good long round, and we generally went backwards and forwards along them, with the coachman stationed at one corner, to be near in case of accident. Felix had a nice easy canter and generally carried us very well, but now and then he preferred a gallop across the lawn or through a field to keeping on the hard road; and as he had a strong mouth and will, he most often had his own way. We were told not to ride on the gravel drive just in front of the house, as our going backwards and forwards so many times tore up the road, so when we came to the bottom of the avenue we always turned round and went up it again. Felix soon found out that we did this every time, and began to turn of his own accord. But before long he took it into his head to shorten his walk down the drive by turning before he reached the corner; and at last, when we were only about half way down he used to wheel sharply round, which was rather inconvenient, if his rider was not prepared for it, and scamper off back again.

One winter, when the roads were so hard and slippery that we could scarcely ever ride, and the pony had little or no work to do, he became quite unmanageable; when we rode him he pretended time after time to stumble, in order to throw us off, and when driven he nearly kicked his carriage to pieces. So one day a horse dealer came to look at him, and as we were playing in a wood on one side of the drive we saw him, to our great sorrow, lead our naughty little Felix away.

I will end this chapter with a copy of some verses which describe the death and burial of a cat that belonged to my elder brothers and sisters, so long ago that I cannot remember it, if, indeed, I was born at the time. The names are imaginary.

THE CHIEF MOURNER.1

Poor Pussy grew older and weaker each day, Her eyes were quite dim and her coat was quite grey; The children all loved her and fed her so well, That which was the kindest she never could tell.

¹ These verses have been printed before in "Nursery Rhymes," by Mrs. Motherly. 1859.

Now Pussy though old, had one wild little son Who always was thinking of mischief and fun; So, much as he loved her, he often would stay At his frolics and gambols, a long time away.

One morning it happen'd, when breakfast was over, Young Kitty went out to hunt mice in the clover; "Good-bye, dearest mother," he cried, "it is sad To see you so ill! But you're not very bad!"

"Alas! pretty Darling, I'm worse than you think.

Ah! he's gone; never mind, I'll take something to drink."

But her legs were so weak and her tongue was so dry,

That Pussy felt now she was going to die.

She turn'd on her side with a faint little moan, And there she lay panting and mewing alone; Till Robert came running with Johnny and Mittie To bring down some dinner for Pussy and Kitty.

"Why, Pussy, dear Pussy, what can be the matter?"
"Stop, give her some milk; that will soon make her fatter."
So Mittie tried this thing and Robert tried that,
But all was too late for the poor dying cat.

Neither stroking, nor kissing, nor patting, nor crying, Though they soothed the poor creature, could save her from dying; And long before sunset she lifted her head, And struggled a moment, and then she was dead!

I cannot remember how long by her side
The children who loved her so well sat and cried,
Till Robert call'd out: "Weep no more, but be merrier!
All we can now do for Puss, is to bury her."

"Very well," said his brother, "we'll make her a bier, And draw her on Mittie's old cart that was here; But who shall be mourner?" "Let me be the Priest," Cried Mittie; "then I can be prettily dress'd."

At last the procession went slowly along;

Mittie sang from a book, Johnny blew loud and strong,

And nurse she look'd grave, and more grave the chief

mourner;

But just then came one with a face still forlorner.

Poor Kitty returning, his mouse-hunting done, Had frisk'd down the garden to join in the fun. Ah! what were his feelings the rest never knew, For whatever he felt, he could only say "Mew!"

At first he was quiet and rubb'd his poor nose Where he used to find comfort and food and repose; Then he jump'd on the bier, but all was in vain, So he got off and follow'd, the first of the train. Still Mittie sang on and the trumpet still blew,
And Kitty, bewilder'd, join'd in with his "Mew."
Cried Robert, "My work of chief mourner is done;
Let Kitty go first; he finds mourning no fun!"

CHAPTER VI.

BIRDS IN THE AVIARY.

AFTER the cage full of little birds was given away, we had a very different kind of aviary. It was about the size of a very large room; on three sides were the walls of the stables and out-houses, the fourth side and top being covered with wire netting. Inside was a quantity of evergreen shrubs, with a rockery and basin of water in the middle.

At different times we had in the aviary a common crow, a hooded crow, a rook, a jackdaw, an owl, a pair of silver pheasants, two herons, a raven, two kinds of hawks, a jay, a chough, and a great many doves. The rook was a wild one, which the gardener shot through the wing, but when he was put into the aviary with the other birds he suddenly became quite tame, and at once made friends with the common crow. They used to sit together up on one of the perches caressing and pluming each other in the most loving way; and if a piece of raw meat (his favourite food) was given to the rook, he always flew off to his friend and laid it before him, never thinking of touching it himself unless the crow refused to eat it.

The jackdaw built herself a nest one spring and laid an While she was building and sitting, the silver pheasant, whose mate was by this time dead, used to strut up and down before the corner in which it was placed, as though to guard it from being injured by the other birds. and violently attacked any person who came near it. The pheasant was a beautiful fellow, with his finely marked black-and-white feathers, bright eyes, and red cheeks and legs. After he had been several years in the aviary we let our country place for a time, and the people who took it did not care for the birds; so they sent some away and let the others loose. They turned out the pheasant, expecting him to go off joyfully to his native woods as soon as he found himself free. But the poor bird stayed by his old home and, leaning against the shut door, seemed so anxious to get in, that they had pity on him and allowed him to spend the rest of his days alone in the aviary.

Of "Jack" the raven I shall speak later, as we had him much longer than any of the other birds. There were a great many herons in our part of Sussex. We used often to see them flying high over the woods and fields towards our ponds and trout-stream, where they used to come and fish, and sometimes we found the print of their feet down at the water's edge. It once occurred to my brother that it would be possible to catch a heron to put him into the aviary, and he determined to try.

He set a whole row of rat-traps down in the wood near a particular part of the stream that they seemed to visit a great deal, hoping that one of them might get caught by its foot while walking along the bank in search of prey. For some time there was great excitement every day, to see whether the plan had succeeded, but the herons seemed carefully to avoid the traps, and we nearly gave up all hope of ever having one. At last, one morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, the gardener was seen in the distance, coming up from the wood with a large grey thing under his arm. We all ran to the window, and as he came nearer saw a long pair of legs dangling down, and a longer neck wriggling in the air above the man's shoulder. No one thought of finishing breakfast, but we all rushed out to meet the gardener and accompany him to the aviary, where he put down his burden. very fine heron, and fortunately its leg was not much injured. Strange to say he did not seem at all wild or shy, but from the first day would stand on one leg with his long neck laid back between his shoulders and his bright eyes winking at us, as we stood and watched him.

Our first care was to go and catch him some fish, which he received gratefully. He had a curious and, to all appearance, very uncomfortable way of eating. When the fish were put into the tank, he would stand for a few moments looking eagerly at the water and then suddenly

make a dash at it, never failing to bring one out and swallow it whole. Sometimes he would gulp down so many fish, one after the other, that at last there really was no room for any more, and he had to stand for about an hour with his long neck stretched straight out, the tail of the last fish often hanging out of his mouth, until those he had first swallowed were digested.

He lived for about six months, spending most of his time standing on one leg, digesting his meals, to all appearance very happy and contented. But in the end he met with a violent death. He got on very well with all the birds, excepting the peacocks. There was a wired division down the middle of the aviary, and they were generally kept on different sides of it, but one day the door was by mistake left open, and one of the peacocks, getting into the heron's division, flew at him and began striking the poor bird's head with his spurs. I happened to pass, and, seeing what was going on, ran indoors for the key, but it could not be found for some time, and before we were able to separate them, the heron was nearly dead. My father took the poor creature to one of the fish-ponds and put him down at the water's edge. hoping that if restored to freedom and its native haunts it might recover. But all our care was in vain, and before night the heron was dead.

A few years later we caught another heron, which as soon as it was put into the aviary, disgorged two or three pounds weight of trout, as though it was conscious of having stolen them from its captors and wished to pacify them by restoring its unlawful possessions.

The peacocks and peahens did not generally live in the aviary, but just before the hay and corn harvests they had to be shut up, as they sometimes did a good deal of damage by walking through the crops. They were very fond of each other, and used to play about like children, dodging in and out, and round and round the trees and shrubberies; and at night they all roosted together, sitting in a row on a branch of a tall tree near the house. They often flew long distances across the fields, and the peacocks looked very beautiful with their long tails sweeping behind them; but while on the wing they generally screamed from time to time in their peculiar discordant way.

Though the peacocks agree very well with their wives and companions, they are most unnatural fathers, and often kill their young ones. Their mates seem to know this. The first spring that we had them, one of the hens went to a wood about a quarter of a mile from the house, and for several weeks spent the whole day there, only coming up every evening for food, and then returning. At last she brought with her two young peacocks, soft, yellowish-grey birds, about the size of common hens. When they had finished their meal, she took them back to their home in the wood, and they did not appear again

until the next evening at feeding-time. This went on every day until the young ones were nearly full grown, when they and their mother came to live near the house with the others.

We once found one of the peahen's nests. It was very roughly built of sticks and leaves, and lay in the middle of some low brushwood, on a bank near the stream. It contained three or four brownish-white eggs, about three times as large as those of a common hen, and some of them slightly speckled with dark brown.

CHAPTER VII.

DOVEY. THE CUCKOO.

E once had a pair of Barbary doves. They were pretty little birds with blue-grey breasts and black rings round their necks, the rest of their bodies being of a delicate pink-grey shaded into white. As long as there were two of them, the doves bestowed all their affection on each other, and did not care for anyone else. But one poor little thing caught cold, it was supposed during a short railway journey that they made; and, after lingering for a few days, died. The other missed his mate very much at first; but he soon brightened up, and made great friends with us all. He became so tame that we used to let him fly about the room nearly all day long. He always took great interest in whatever was going on, and came round to each of us in turn to get a little petting and to see what we were doing. Sometimes Dovey was rather troublesome in this way, for he would coolly take the pen out of the hand of anyone who was writing, or carry off our work materials in his beak. He had a very pretty way of asking for notice: he would perch on our knee or shoulder, and bending down his head, and flapping his wings gently up and down, coo very softly; we always knew what this meant, and stroked his fluffy neck for him.

He liked my mother better than anyone else, as most of our bird pets did, and would sit on her lap by the hour as quietly as a cat, sometimes sleeping, and sometimes coaxing her to pet him. In the winter he was very fond of lying in the middle of the marble fender with his tail and one wing spread out towards the fire, enjoying the warmth, and looking as though he were an ornament cut out of the stone. One of his favourite amusements was to sit on our heads, and pull our hair; and he generally spent our meal-times flying from the head of one person to another, unless he was hopping round the table in search of tit-bits. Dinner was once served by an old grey-haired butler who had only arrived that morning, and knew nothing of our pets. As he was handing round the plates, Dovey, who had been sitting upon the top of a picture-frame, suddenly alighted on the man's head. We found it very difficult to keep straight faces. but he seemed not to have noticed anything, and went on with his serving in the gravest manner; Dovey, meanwhile, being delighted with the nice warm nest he had found, and every now and then giving mischievous little pecks at his hair. The bird at last flew back to its high perch, and the man, without looking, still went on with his duty, as though nothing unusual had happened. But

we afterwards heard, that as soon as dinner was over, he appeared in the kitchen looking quite aghast, and in accents of horror exclaimed: "What was it?"

In the summer-time we used to take Dovey every morning to the aviary and leave him there all day, as he could not fly about in the house now that so many doors and windows were open. He liked this very much, but was always quite ready to come in again for the night; and directly anyone went into the aviary, he would fly down and coo for pleasure. But one evening his mistress went to fetch him, and no Dovey came to her. She called him, and looked all about the bushes, but he was nowhere to be seen. She came in, thinking that one of us might have taken him back to his cage; and, when she found it standing empty, began to be very anxious about her pet. When the aviary was searched more carefully, there were found, near a large rat-hole, a few of the soft, grey feathers that we knew so well, suggesting the sad end of our pet. We did not give up all hope for some time, thinking that he might possibly have escaped during the day when the door was opened. and that he would come back to us when he grew tired of freedom. But we never saw Dovey again, and were all very unhappy about his loss, for he was one of the tamest and prettiest pets we have ever had.

One day the gardener asked my father to go up to the kitchen garden, and see something that he had found there. He went, and saw—sitting in, or rather on, a very small nest on the ground, under a large rhubarb-leaf—a strange ugly bird about the size of a pigeon. Its colour was dark, muddy brown; it was evidently quite young, for it gaped for food with its great yellow beak, and could not fly at all. The gardener had no idea what kind of bird it could be, and my father was not able to tell him for some time. But presently a little water-wagtail flew down, and going straight up to the large creature, stuffed a worm which she had brought with her down its throat. Then he knew that it must be a cuckoo, for he remembered that these birds always lay their eggs in the nest of some small bird, generally in that of the water-wagtail, or, as it is called in Sussex, "dish-washer."

My father told the man to put a cage of wire netting over the nest, with holes large enough to admit the wagtail, without allowing the cuckoo to get out. He was left there until he was supposed to be old enough to feed himself, when we brought him in, and put him into poor Dovey's empty cage, with plenty of food and water. But he did not like this change, and squealed in a most ridiculous manner with his great beak wide open, and tumbled about the cage as though he had no power at all over his legs and wings. Next morning, as he still seemed uncomfortable and frightened, we took his cage outside on to the lawn, and set it down in the sunshine. Before long, although this was nearly a quarter of a mile from the

place where the cuckoo had been found, the foster-mother and father flew down on to the terrace, where they chattered together and seemed to be holding a consultation about the best means of liberating the big baby. Presently one of them flew away, and returned in a minute or two with a worm, which it took to the cage and poked through the wires, to the great satisfaction of the prisoner. My father, thinking that the little thing would like to go inside to feed him, went out and pushed two of the wires apart, so as to allow her to enter. directly afterwards flew down with a large yellow butterfly. She did not take it to him this time, but danced about with it a little way off, plainly coaxing him to try and escape. My father had scarcely reached the dining-room, where we were all standing watching the cuckoo, when he exclaimed, "It's getting out!" and there indeed it was, pushing and struggling half-way out between the wires. Long before he could reach the cage, the heretofore great, helpless-looking bird was flying swiftly high up in the air towards a large tree in the meadow, where he settled and was joined by his foster-parents. Next day we saw him flying about, followed by three or four wagtails; a few days later the number of his attendants increased to six, and for some weeks afterwards he stayed near the house, accompanied wherever he went by his train of devoted little followers, whose only occupation seemed to be filling his great hungry beak with all the food that they could find.

It is generally believed that the cuckoo, as soon as he grows independent of his foster-parents and their assistants, kills and devours them. Hence most likely the popular tradition in Sussex, that in the early autumn, when his note is no longer heard, the cuckoo turns into a hawk.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILD BIRDS IN THE COUNTRY. WILD RABBITS.

THE AOUARIUM.

A BOUT this time I was away at a school in Germany for some years; meanwhile, Bertha had some new pets, of which she gives me the following account:—

"When I was alone at home with my parents, I used to amuse myself during my play-time, which I always spent out of doors, by trying to tame the wild birds. nailed a little wooden tray against an oak that had twigs growing out of its trunk for the birds to perch on. stood just inside a wood on one side of the drive, but not too much exposed to the view of passers-by. morning regularly I filled the tray with bread-crumbs and bird-seed, with a little piece of raw meat now and then for a great treat. I watched anxiously to see what birds would come first, and in a few days had the pleasure of finding three tomtits hopping about my tree, and carrying off the crumbs and seeds. It was delightful to have these pretty sprightly little fellows with their bright yellowand black breasts and white cheeks for my first visitors, instead of the rather vulgar-looking sparrows that are



BREAKFAST TIME.

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generally only too eager to secure any food that may be awaiting hungry mouths. The next birds that came were a pair of chaffinches: the cock never became very tame, but his little mate was soon a great pet with everyone. After a time I had twelve birds that fed regularly at my box; they were, a pair of tomtits, the chaffinches, a pair of nut-hatches, a pair of coal-tits, a pair of marsh-titmice, a robin, and a hedge-sparrow.

"It was very amusing to stand by and watch all their different ways. The chaffinches would sit shelling their seeds in their beaks like any of the cage-birds; but all the titmice, holding their favourite hemp-seed between their feet on the branch of a tree, hammered at it with their beak until the shell gave way. The nut-hatches were very odd birds, and ran down the tree to the box like mice; they always carried off the best morsels, for none of the smaller ones dared to interfere with them.

"In the cold weather my birds used to meet me as I came out of the house and fly after me to the wood. They were not at all afraid of Carlo, my large dog, who generally accompanied me, and sat by the tree quite quietly, expecting his little share of the feast. In the spring the chaffinches built their nest in an oak-tree within sight of the box, and when their young ones were hatched they carried off nice large crumbs to them. As soon as the little birds could leave their nest, the proud mother had the pleasure of introducing her family to me

and to the other birds. The pretty fluffy things used to sit one at a time on a twig by the box, while the mother filled their gaping beaks with bread-crumbs.

"Most of the birds would feed at the tray while I stood near enough to have touched them; but the marsh-tit-mice and the robin became so tame that they would feed out of my hand as I stood under the tree. All excepting the chaffinch deserted me in the summer, but she became tamer than ever, and would fly to any of us directly we came out of doors, following us from tree to tree as we walked about."

The robin that fed at Bertha's box used also to keep us company when we were out, and hop about on our feet as we sat on the lawn. Later on we tamed a great many by feeding them every day; some of them would come and peck crumbs off our muffs. One dear little thing came indoors whenever he found a window open. He was particularly fond of flying into my mother's bedroom, in which he thought he had discovered a rival favourite. Day after day he attacked it most fiercely, but as the rival was his own reflection in the mirror, the poor bird only got a great many hard knocks against the glass in his efforts to revenge himself on his fancied enemy. The mirror was sometimes smeared with his blood.

One day, Pilot, who was very fond of sniffing about the banks for rabbits, stopped before a large burrow and began scratching up the sand with great diligence. My father sent him off, and, feeling in the hole, found three young rabbits—pretty little things with soft grey fur and large, mild-looking eyes. He brought them indoors, and said we might each have one. We were delighted with them, and determined to keep them and bring them up as pets. Just at first they were rather timid, but in a few hours made themselves quite at home. We let them run about the study floor, which they enjoyed very much, and hopped round the room quite merrily, every now and then stopping to drink milk out of a saucer that stood on the ground for them, or sitting up on their hind legs to have their soft noses scratched. I think they would have made very nice pets if we had been able to keep them; but one day the box in which they lived was by mistake upset, and the three little rabbits scampered off to their native wood, and I daresay told their mother a long story of their visit to the human beings who had been so kind to them.

Sometimes, when one of the fish-ponds was cleaned, we used to get some of the tiny young fish and keep them for pets. At first we put them into jars or glass tumblers, but these made very dull homes for the poor little things, and I think they must have been as much pleased as we were when my father made Bertha a present of a small aquarium. It was about two feet long by one wide, and had an arch of rock-work standing in the middle. It looked very pretty when we filled it with water, with

shells and sand on the ground, some weeds and small water-lily leaves, and the tiny fish darting about, their shining scales every now and then catching the light. There were some grey bream, scarcely an inch long, some chub with a delicate pinkish tint, and a row of dark spots on their sides, and prettier still, some beautiful little silver-blue roach,—all just like toy fish, only with the advantage of being alive. It was so delightful that they never grew any larger while confined in their little prison, though they lived for several years. Some of them grew so tame that they would eat bread-crumbs from our fingers. About once a week we used to take them out of the aquarium and change the water. It was very amusing to see them, when they were put back again, darting about with their mouths wide open after the almost invisible insects of which the water was full.

When we let the place, Bertha gave away the aquarium and its little occupants, as it would have been a troublesome piece of luggage, and we should have found it difficult to keep it supplied with pond water in a town.

CHAPTER IX.

CARLO.

ND now I come back to Carlo, the young dog of whom old Pilot was so jealous. I do not know how to describe him, except by saying that he was the most good-natured, affectionate, and ridiculous dog that I ever saw or heard of. He was, however, by no means ugly, being a handsome black retriever, with a well-formed. wiry body, strong legs, and fine glossy hair. But he was nearly always brimming over with happiness, and showed his delight in the oddest manner, "galumphing" about wildly with a broad grin on his dear old face, especially if his master spoke one word to him, or even looked at him. Carlo arrived the day before Bertha's birthday, and was my father's present to her, appearing next morning at breakfast with a blue ribbon round his neck. not, however, understand that he was her dog, but from the first hour that he came, took a great liking to his new master, and was always quite devoted to him. That morning Bertha took him out for a walk, leading him by a chain, as she thought he might run away in search of his old home; but he behaved very well, and when he

was brought back to the house, sat down before the door, and put up his paw in an odd, vague way, which always meant that he wanted something: this time, as usual, it was his master that he wanted.

Carlo was fond of all of us, but he was never perfectly happy excepting when in his master's presence, and when there, cared neither for food nor anything else. Soon after he came to us, my father had a bad fever; and the poor dog's howlings and moanings during his illness were piteous to hear. I never heard any other dog howl in such a curious manner; he began high up "wow, wow, wow," and descended the whole chromatic scale, ending down in the depths with a few despairing groans. was soon partly consoled by hearing his master's cough through the open window, for it was summer-time. father used to be moved every morning from the room he slept in to another on the opposite side of the house; Carlo soon found this out, and spent hours lying under the windows of whichever room he occupied, listening intently for the least sound, with his ears pricked up and an occasional soft whine. When my father was getting well again, and, for the first time in several weeks, went out on the lawn, Carlo had to be taken away to his kennel, as he nearly threw him down in his frantic joy.

He was quite as good a water-dog as Pilot had been, and enjoyed swimming even better. If his master passed a pond without sending him into it, he would bring a broken bough or anything that came first to hand, and laying it at his feet, run to the water's edge ready to plunge in. Once, when he could find nothing better, he made for the wood, and tore down a thick stem of ivy from an old oak-tree.

It was about three years after he came to us that we let the place, and poor Carlo, much to his sorrow, remained behind, as we did not want to take him to London, and the people who came to our house were glad to keep him till we could have him again. Carlo had always been very fond of running after the carriage, and it was, no doubt, a consolation to him at our departure that his great friend, a chestnut horse, remained with him at his old home. A few months later my father went back to see about some repairs, and, as he was driving from the station in a fly, met Carlo with his horse and carriage going down to the town. The dog saw who was in the fly, and stood still for a few moments, not able to make up his mind whether to keep to his own horse or desert it and follow the fly; then with a short, sharp bark, he turned round and went back to the house. His master had won the day.

Soon afterwards, when we went to live for a time at the sea-side, about thirty miles from home, a cart was sent there to fetch some books and pictures, and, to our great delight, our dear old Carlo. The men who went with the cart packed him away into a corner, surrounded and

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covered over by packing-cases. Very miserable the poor dog must have been all day, and scarcely less so when he was taken out of the dark little hole to find himself in a strange place, and among strange people, for the cart stopped at the stables, which were at some distance from the house. But we were longing to see him, and he was soon brought to us. The joy of the meeting was almost He rushed wildly first to one and too much for Carlo. then to another, jumping and gambolling about in his odd, excited way; every now and then dropping down with fatigue, and looking up at his master's face with the broadest grin of delight; but in a minute up he was again, wagging his tail frantically, and relieving his feelings by the strangest antics. At last, when his excitement was a little cooled down, we took him to the kitchen for his supper, and then put him into the court-yard, where he howled mournfully all night long, thinking, I suppose, that his pleasure had only been a happy dream now that he found himself alone in the dark.

He arrived on Saturday night, and on Monday morning my father and I took him down to the sea, wondering whether he would be afraid of such a strange kind of pond; but no—he dashed straight into it after a stick, not in the least minding the foam and breakers; and from that day became the admiration of the fishermen and boatmen of the place. Of course there were a great many dogs in the town that could swim well, but none equalled Carlo.

If the sea was very rough, he watched for a good opportunity, and when a large wave was just breaking, sprang into the air high over it—in this way escaping the foam and the strong back-current. Sometimes the force of the waves was too much for him, and before he could reach his stick, a great mountain broke, and rushed up the beach in boiling white foam, and Carlo would be washed up headover-heels, and left high and dry by the receding water: not a bit did he care, but, directly he could get on his legs, sprang in again; and if his master, thinking it too dangerous, tried to call him off, he had great difficulty in making the brave dog obey. Sometimes, in very rough weather, the sea wall would be lined with people watching Carlo's feats of swimming; but they were quickly scattered, and their admiration turned into disgust, when he rushed up the steps that led from the beach, and scampered about amongst them, flourishing a large fish-hamper, such as he was very fond of rescuing from the waves, and which, like himself, was dripping wet, only stopping now and then just to give himself a good shake. One old boatman in particular was a great admirer of Carlo, and always called him "my dog." One day, when he had been swimming bravely in a tremendous sea, the man said to my father: "If ever you should miss that dog, Sir, you'll know who's taken him." Another time, as we were walking by the sea, he came up to us, and said that he had some very fine scollops, which were so much a dozen (naming the usual price), but that we could have them much cheaper "because of my dog, Sir." He was told to take the scollops to the house, as, having never eaten them, we were rather curious to find out whether they tasted better than they looked; but the result of the experiment was so unsatisfactory, that I expect "my dog" got by far the largest share.

One day when Carlo was out with us, we passed a man who was filling a wheelbarrow with shingle down by the sea. He had several planks laid on the beach for the barrow to run on, and Carlo, seeing them, thought they would be capital things to swim after. Down he jumped from the wall, and seizing hold of one, dragged it away over several of the wooden groins, followed by the man, who, though he had nothing to carry, and Carlo's plank was ten feet long, could not catch him. So he had to content himself with calling out and throwing stones at the dog, who paid no attention to his threats, and only dropped his prize when told to do so by his master.

But though Carlo was so fond of swimming, and would brave the wildest sea, he had a great horror of water being thrown upon him; one single drop on his nose was enough to send him skulking away with his tail between his legs. For more than a year he always retreated into his kennel directly I opened my bedroom window, and no entreaties would bring him out, simply because I once or twice gave him a little shower-bath when I was watering

the flower-pots on my window-sill, not knowing that he would mind it. One day, when he had been roaming about down on the beach, he came home with some scales of a fish that, no doubt, he had been devouring, sticking to his neck. I went out to his kennel with a can of water, at the sight of which the poor dog looked very miserable, though he made no resistance when I laid hold of his collar; but when I began to pour the water on his neck, he dropped down, and, shutting his eyes, lay there, to all appearance dead, till the operation was over, when he slowly opened them, and then springing up, began frisking about merrily. Poor Carlo had evidently thought I was cutting his throat, and that the water (it was lukewarm) was his life-blood trickling down; his surprise and joy were therefore great when, at the end of it all, he found himself still in the land of the living.

The dear old dog was so fond of his master, and so anxious to have a word from him, that he would do everything he could think of to attract his attention. When he had brought a stick out of the sea, he made himself quite troublesome by dropping it with a bang on the pavement just in front of our feet, or on his master's heels, every two or three minutes, to have the pleasure of hearing him say, "Pick it up." If we paid no attention to him, but walked on, he would wait by the stick for a bit, and then, galloping on in front of us, stand with his head on one side grinning in such a beseeching way that we had

to send him off in great delight by telling him to "fetch There was at the top of our garden a long grass terrace, on which we often walked in the summer instead of going out into the hot, dusty roads. In the middle of the terrace was a large summer-house standing back among the trees. One morning, as we were walking up and down with my father, Carlo as usual following us, when we came to the summer-house he went into it, and next time we passed was sitting in the farthest corner in a very dejected manner, just moving the tip of his tail, and looking up entreatingly, evidently meaning to say, "Do let me come out!" My father called him, and out he bounced, wagging his tail and twisting round so as to brush his nose with it, which he always did when he was particularly grateful and happy. Next time we came to the middle of the terrace, Carlo again disappeared, quite of his own accord; and when we returned went through the same performance of humble entreaty and then of great delight at being The dear doggie had invented this way of getting a word from his master and a little attention from us all, and found it answer so well that he did it over and over again until we were quite tired of giving him permission to end his voluntary imprisonment.

His devotion went even further than this, for if he had any choice he would often do what he liked least, hoping in this way to please his master. When Carlo was out with my father, and we met or overtook him during his walk, the good old dog would leave him and follow us without being told to do so, but showing by his sorrowful look and hanging tail that he was acting very much against his own inclination. It was still more ludicrous to see his conduct when, if out with us, he saw my father on the other side of the street; he went half-way across and stood there, quite regardless of passing carriages and carts, with his long legs sprawling, his great head on one side, one lip curled up, and grinning with all his might. If his master called him, he made the street echo with his joyful barking, and bounced about nearly upsetting the passers-by; if not, he came slowly back and followed us, with a low whistling whine and a few longing glances towards the other side of the street.

It was not that Carlo did not care for anyone else, for I think he loved each of us more than most dogs do their particular master or mistress. When several of us went out together with him, he was in the greatest alarm if we broke up our party and went different ways, or if anyone stopped behind to go into a shop. He rushed wildly from one to the other, looking most anxiously into our faces and telling us to the best of his power that he had the charge of us, and thought this a very dangerous way of proceeding; that we should certainly lose ourselves unless we let him show us the way back to our companions; and was not content until he saw us all safe together again, or was assured that it was all right, and

that he need not trouble himself about it. Once, when Bertha and I had been away from home for about a week, Carlo was waiting at the station with someone who had come to meet us when we returned. I was first made aware of his presence by feeling one of his great soft paws on each of my shoulders, and his rough red tongue licking my face all over. He would lie for hours on the grass outside the breakfast-room in pouring rain rather than take refuge in his kennel, or wander about the garden and road for the mere pleasure of seeing us indistinctly through the glass, and hearing every now and then a pitying: "Poor old doggie!"

Carlo's kennel was a great rendezvous for the sparrows and other little birds, as they could always find plenty of odds and ends of food lying round it; he let them hop about quite close to his paws, and sat watching them quietly, as though making them welcome to the remains of his dinner. Once, as I was looking from my bedroom window, which was just above, I saw a pert little robin hop right into the kennel after some tit-bit, though the great black monster was lying in it and watching him. He was equally good-natured towards all his dog acquaintances, and never fought unless obliged to do so in self-defence, excepting in two battles that he had with a dog that came after he had been with us some time, and of whom he was naturally jealous; but of this I shall speak later on. Carlo was so boisterous that he was seldom invited in-

doors, but sometimes, for a great treat, we let him come into the dining-room at meal-time. It was quite a pleasure to see his joy and gratitude on these occasions. He would bundle himself in with suppressed barks of delight. bouncing about, dashing his great hard tail against the furniture, and threatening to upset everything; but when once put into a corner and told to lie down, he was perfectly quiet, excepting that as each one of us came into the room he could not help running to meet us with great signs of joy, as if he had not seen us for weeks. During the meal he lay like a statue, with his eyes fixed on his master's face, unless someone spoke to him or looked at him, when he showed his gratitude for attention by knocking his tail, thump, thump, thump, against the floor. He did not care for bread, and would not touch it at his kennel, but in the dining-room he devoured it as though he were starving-simply out of delight, and gratitude to the giver. If anything that was thrown to him fell just out of his reach, he did not move to get it unless told to do so. Though Carlo knew that when we left the dining-room after dinner there would be another, and for him much more substantial meal in the kitchen, as soon as we began to get up from our chairs he scuttled round the room to the door by which his master left it to go to the study; though a certain friend of his, of whom I shall soon speak, at the same time made his way to the other, which led

towards the kitchen. Carlo was very near-sighted—one cause, no doubt, of his awkwardness—and he had very little scent, a rare fault, I should think, in dogs of his kind. When he was out in the town with us he often lost himself, or rather us, when he was seized with such a panic that he would dash wildly up and down the street, often passing us three or four times before his agitation allowed him to see us or hear our calls.

But some of his mistakes can scarcely be excused by short-sightedness. For instance, one day my father and I had been for a long walk, and took a fly in the town to bring us home. Carlo as usual bounced about, encouraging the horse by leaping up to his nose with furious barks, much to the poor creature's surprise; but presently he quieted down, and ran along by the side of the fly, only now and then giving a joyful little burst. turned the corner to come up our street, a great railwaywaggon, drawn by two grey horses, overtook us, and went Poor old Carlo was always very much straight on. puzzled by the many carriages and carts in the town, as he had seldom seen any but his own when he lived in the country. Instead of turning up the street with us and our one brown horse, he went on by the side of the waggon; and, notwithstanding my father's calling and whistling, we saw him disappear with it, every now and then looking up in a rather perplexed way at the great heavy grey horses, but jogging along with his tail swinging merrily.

Another time, as we were driving home in an open fly, a close carriage-and-pair passed us, and Carlo was again puzzled, and followed it. We thought he was sure to leave the carriage when he found that it did not stop at our house; but when we got home no Carlo was there. We saw nothing of him all day long, and were beginning to get quite anxious, when, after dark, the coachman belonging to the carriage arrived, leading Carlo, who seemed delighted to find himself at home again. He had followed the carriage past our house several miles into the country, back again, down the street, and quite to the other end of the town, where he seemed rather confounded, when it stopped, to see some strange people get out of it. The coachman said his mistress had noticed that a dog was following her carriage, and told him to bring him home (the address being fortunately on his collar), as he was so young that very likely he did not know his way about. We were very grateful to the lady for sending our poor silly Carlo back to us, and did not say that he had arrived at the, for a dog, mature age of seven years. Carlo made so many mistakes of this kind, that we were afraid we should some day lose him altogether; and he was not allowed to follow us any more when we went out driving. This was a great loss to the dear old dog, but he put up with it with his usual good temper, and would stand quite quietly at the gate watching us as we drove away, though one word would have sent him racing after us in wild delight.

I think that Carlo must have been endowed with the nine lives that cats are supposed to possess, for he met with several accidents that would have killed any other dog, and was none the worse for them. Soon after he came to us, he managed to get in the way of the carriage just as it was starting from the door, and one of the back wheels passed quite over his body: he gave one little howl, and took no more notice of the accident, but began gambolling about as merrily as usual by the side of the horse. One day, during our walk, we waited for a few minutes at a place where two streets met, debating whether we should go to a certain shop in one of them. stood in the middle of the road watching to see which way we meant to go, when, just as we moved on, a tradesman's cart came very quickly round the corner, and before he had time to get out of the way, knocked him down, and went right over his back. We saw him go down with a cry of pain, and were afraid to look again; but we were not long kept in suspense, for in another moment Carlo was dancing round us, barking his loudest with joy to find that, after all, we were going to continue our walk instead of turning back as he had feared. Once, when we were passing the gate of an ironmonger's factory, a man came out holding across his shoulder three or four long bars of iron, which swung down, first on one side, then on the other, as he walked. Just as Carlo passed, they came down with a heavy swing straight on the top

of his head, giving him a blow which seemed as if it must at least have stunned him; but he only gave one sharp bark, and trotted on as though nothing had happened.

At last one day, when poor Carlo was getting old, he sprained one of his hind legs so badly while swimming in a very rough sea, that after that he could scarcely put it to the ground. But this made no difference in his sprightliness, and in his old age the dear dog is as merry and frolicsome as he was in his youngest and freshest days.

CHAPTER X.

WILD BIRDS IN THE TOWN. LINNY.

THE second year that we were at the seaside, we began to tame the wild birds by putting food for them outside the garden window of the breakfast-room. There were always quantities of birds in our garden, as it was a very large one, and had a great many trees and evergreen shrubs, and plenty of fruit in the summer.

At first no birds came to eat our crumbs but dozens of house-sparrows, which we did not encourage, as they were very greedy, and kept the others away. But before long we were visited by a great many of different kinds, some of whom came regularly twice a day to the window for months together: there were a pair of chaffinches, three blackbirds, three thrushes, a tomtit, a pair of blue-tits, two hedge-sparrows, a jackdaw, a green linnet, several robins, and half-a-dozen starlings.

It was quite amusing to see the birds flying down from the trees all round directly anyone appeared at the window with a plate. In the summer we used to put some crumbs inside on the carpet, and very soon a hedge-sparrow, a chaffinch, and a robin would come in and pick them up. The other two never went farther than this, but the robin after some months became quite tame, and made us all very fond of him. Any time of the day that we opened the window and called, "Bobby! Bobby!" the little pet was sure to be within hearing, and came flying in for the morsels of cake or biscuit which he knew would be waiting for him. He even knew the exact time of our breakfast, and regularly every morning we found him waiting on the large stone outside, or on the foot-scraper near the window, which was a favourite perch of his. often came downstairs rather early to have the pleasure of seeing Bobby eat his breakfast. As soon as I opened the window, he flew in on to a little table that stood near, and looked round, to see that all was safe. Then he made his way to the breakfast-table, hopping along the book-shelves that ran down one side of the room, every now and then looking at me and giving his wings a little flap, just to show me that he was quite ready to fly off if I purposed any treachery—especially if I stopped speaking, for he liked to be talked to all the time he was in the At last he arrived at the table, and after pecking a few crumbs off the bread-platter, hopped away from one knife or fork to another (often making me tremble for his little toes), and so, by many stages, to the object of his ambition—the butter-dish. Now he was in his glory, and sat on the edge of the glass plate, giving violent little digs at the butter, looking as if he certainly would have licked his lips if it had been in the nature of robins to do so under any circumstances. In a few minutes he flew away, but if the window was left open, was sure to return while we were all sitting at breakfast, and try a few more dishes. Sometimes he perched himself on the top of a large round loaf of brown bread, where he looked exactly like the pictures of a robin on a plum-pudding that one sees so often on Christmas cards. Bobby liked coming in while we were doing needlework and someone read aloud: he would hop about by our feet, or on our workbaskets, and look on the tables and book-shelves and in every corner for some chance crumbs. He did not mind our moving about the room while he was there, or even going in or out at the door; but if he saw anyone at the window, he would at once fly straight out over their head. as if he feared they might be going to shut it and make him a prisoner. If Bobby found the window closed when he wanted to pay us a visit, he tapped at it with his beak, or sat just outside waiting till he was let in; and sometimes he would sit on the low window-sill and sing us a merry little song.

When the spring came, Bobby spent nearly the whole day carrying crumbs to his mate and young ones in their nest, that was built in a shrub near the window; and later on we could hear the little things whistling eagerly as he flew backwards and forwards with food for them. But I am sorry to say that, when the young robins grew big

enough to take care of themselves, they behaved very badly to their father, driving him away from the window, and even flying into the room to attack him, though they were not tame enough to come in for food.

In the summer-time the young birds left off coming regularly, but Bobby appeared every day for more than a year, until at last, one very cold day in the winter, we found him lying dead on the garden-path. After his death we had no heart to tame another robin, especially as his successors were likely to be his own sons, whom we suspected, to judge from their former conduct, and the ruffled state of his plumage, not to have been quite guiltless of the death of our dear little Bobby.

At the same time that the robin had his little family, a great many other birds used to carry away the bread-crumbs that we gave them, to feed their young. In the early spring they would sometimes come to the window with a piece of hay or straw in their beak, which they put down for a minute or two while they ate a few crumbs, and then taking it up, flew off to the bushes where they were building their nests. Later on there was an almost incessant squeaking of young sparrows, who sat on the turf just in front of the windows, flapping their wings and gaping for food, whilst their mothers hopped about busily, picking up crumbs and stuffing them into their yellow beaks, often nearly choking the little things in their hurry. I once watched a cunning young sparrow that pecked

away lustily at the bread-crumbs until it saw its mother with one in her beak, when it stood still, shaking its wings and squeaking helplessly until the crumb was pushed down its throat; and then immediately went to work again on its own account. The young ones of the chaffinches were pretty downy things, larger than their parents, but not so greedy or so like spoilt children as the little sparrows.

One of the thrushes used to come every day with her family of four great fluffy young birds, who seemed very dull and helpless. They would sit for five minutes together without moving so much as a feather, while she hunted about for food, and then they appeared to have great difficulty in eating it. We once watched her take a worm to one of them: as soon as she put it into his beak, he dropped it; she picked it up and stuffed it in again, but with the same result, and this went on till she had made about ten trials to force it on him, when at last he managed to make it disappear down his great red throat.

Soon after we began to feed the birds, a green linnet came two or three times, and after that we saw no more of her, or any of her kind, until nearly a year later. I then had a tame linnet whose cage often stood outside the window on the lawn. On the 14th of February—a real soft, bright St. Valentine's Day—I put Linny out in the warm sunshine. He was very happy, and hopped

about, singing as merrily as any of the birds that were making love to each other in the trees. But presently I noticed that he was sitting still on one of his perches, uttering a long, shrill chirrup; then I heard the same sound at the other end of the garden. It came nearer. Linny always answering it; and at last another green linnet appeared, and hopped about the lawn, every now and then flying up and hovering round the cage. bird seemed quite delighted, and very anxious to get out to his new friend, no doubt thinking that she would make him a nice little wife; and I thought of setting him free to go in search of her, but my father said he would not be able to find a living, having been born and bred in a cage. The bird came several times, and the two seemed so fond of each other that we made a trap of a cage, with a string tied to the door so that we could shut it and catch the little stranger if she went in for food. first day that we set the trap she did not come at all to visit my linnet; then came a rainy day, so that he could not be put outside: on the third, she did come, but to Linny's great disgust, the faithless little bird brought a husband with her. They both flew to the cage and clung on to its sides, opening their beaks for Linny to feed them; but he behaved very differently now, and ate away at his seeds as if he did not notice them, only flying fiercely at them when they settled on his cage. We did not try to catch the bird any more, as we thought it would be cruel to do

so now that she had found another mate; and we could not have done so if we had wished, as the pair never came again after their unpleasant treatment by Linny. He did not pine for his faithless love, but was only the more affectionate to his old friends, and made everyone very fond of him by the pretty coaxing way he had of hopping up to the corner of his perch and chirruping for hemp-seeds which he was only allowed to eat out of our hands. Not long after, however, we had a present of a kitten, who seemed so much inclined to make a meal of my linnet that I gave him to a little sick boy, who was delighted with the treasure, and promised to take great care of him.

CHAPTER XI.

ROY.

HEN we had had Carlo for about a year, my father bought a collie dog, who came straight from an island on the west coast of Scotland. I was in Germany, but Bertha wrote and told me that he was a great beauty, and that he was to belong to me, as Carlo was her dog; so I was very anxious to see him. But I never imagined such a beautiful creature as was awaiting me—his mistress—when I came home. It is impossible to describe my lovely Roy at all well, but I must do my best.

He was a very large collie, standing an inch or two higher than most dogs of his kind. His head and legs and the greater part of his long wavy tail were a creamy fawn colour, shaded on his ears and shoulders into a rich tawny brown, for which he had, I suppose, been given his name of "Roy," for it belonged to him in Scotland. (It was a matter of dispute whether the name had been given for this reason, or because from his superior size and

beauty he might be termed the king of collies.) His chest and the end of his nose were white, which colour was continued in a narrow line up between his eyes to the top of his head. His back was black, shaded into fawn colour on the lower part of his body, and a black line was continued along his tail; his toes and a few hairs at the tip of his tail were white, but so gradually shaded from the fawn that it scarcely showed. He also had a little tuft of white hair at the back of his neck. On his hind legs were thick masses of wavy, fawn-coloured hair, which, with their bushy tail, is, I believe, a natural cushion, with which sheep-dogs are provided to keep them from cold when sitting on the damp grass minding their flocks. Roy's colouring, from the pale gold-brown hair on his face and legs to the long, glossy, black coat that shook up and down on his back as he trotted along, was most lovely; but his chief beauty lay in the shape and proportion of his splendid head, with the delicately formed (but not sharppointed) nose, and large, oval, brown eyes, which were by far the finest and most expressive that I have ever seen in a dog.

Poor little Roy (we always said "old Carlo" and "little Roy," though Roy was the elder by one year) was very much admired and petted on his arrival; but this did not reconcile him to leaving his old friends and island home, and on the first opportunity he ran away and went in search of them. Fortunately, he wore a collar bearing his new

master's name, or I should, very likely, never again have seen my beautiful pet, for that same day he reached a farm forty miles off, and was found in the evening by the farmer lying exhausted on the straw in his yard. The kind man gave the poor dog some food, and took care of him for a few days, while he advertised him in a newspaper. A friend of my father's saw the advertisement and wrote to him about it, so the truant was sent back, and soon became reconciled to English manners and his new friends.

Of course I was very proud of my pet, especially as everyone who saw him (excepting one young lady whose great friend had a little black-and-tan collie) said that he was the finest dog of his kind they had ever seen. Even one old gentleman who knew all about the races and pedigrees of dogs, and had several of the kind himself, acknowledged this.

Carlo behaved very well, on the whole, to his new companion, which was very good of the dear old dog, considering how much more Roy was noticed and petted than he had ever been; for as Roy lived indoors he was much more with us. During all the years we had them together they only fought twice. Their first quarrel was over some bone or other dainty morsel they had found lying about; the other was about a piece of wood which Carlo, having fetched it out of the water and carried it home a long way, thought was his exclusive property, and

therefore objected to Roy's running for it when I threw it some way off and told them both to "fetch it."

Roy enjoyed swimming in the ponds, and would feel for sunken sticks with his hind legs, as Pilot used to do; but he never carried things well, and always dropped his stick as soon as he reached land. We often took both the dogs into the boat with us: Carlo generally sat up in his corner with a very penitential air, but Roy rather enjoyed being rowed about. If we told them to do so, they would jump out and swim to shore. Once when Roy was in the boat with Henry I called to him; he immediately jumped out and began to swim towards me. The swans, who were very savage creatures, and disliked the dogs, seeing him in the water, began half-swimming, half-flying towards him, intending, no doubt, to take advantage of his helpless position to attack him, when they would very likely have succeeded in killing my poor I called to Henry, and he rowed after Roy with all his might, while I threw stones at the swans. anxious moment: at one time it seemed impossible that the boat should get between them and their prey, as they rushed on, flapping their great wings and hissing angrily; but Henry just managed it, and while Roy jumped on to the bank and capered merrily at my side, he revenged himself by chasing them once or twice round the pond, which they did not like at all.

When we went to London, Roy was unfortunately

taken with us, and, from the want of exercise and fresh air, quite lost his health and temper. He used to go for a daily walk in Kensington Gardens, where he was very much admired: but he soon became so quarrelsome that we were in continual dread of his fighting, for he attacked almost every dog as big or bigger than himself that he met, particularly any other collies; though, like most large dogs, he would never fight a smaller one, however much he was provoked. He also took a great dislike to postmen, sweeps, and clergymen, and always flew at any he met on his way to the Gardens. In front of the house there was a small bit of garden divided from the road by a wall with large round holes in the stuccowork. When we started for our walk, Roy, without waiting for the gate to be opened, generally flew straight through one of these apertures, and challenged the first person he met with on the other side with furious barking. Often when the door was opened in answer to a ring at the bell, the first thing seen or heard by the visitors would be Roy, literally flying out with all his legs in the air, and barking at them at the very top of his voice. not that he meant to hurt them—he never bit anyone in his life; but of course a great many people were frightened by this unexpected reception, and orders were given that Roy was to be kept tied up in the kitchen, and that, of course, did not improve his spirits or temper.

One day, as we were walking in a part of the Gardens

that we had never before explored, we came upon a square patch of long grass—quite a little hay-field, that was railed off from the rest. Roy jumped straight over the railing, and nearly went mad with joy at finding something like a bit of real country in the middle of the great town. He barked and jumped about, and kicked, and tore up the grass with his teeth, eating some and throwing the rest to this side and that, until we became quite afraid that he would be taken up as dangerous, and called him away.

He was not very clever at finding anyone by scent; I suppose it is not an essential point in collies. It is all the more remarkable that the very first time he went out in London, on the day after his arrival, when returning from his walk, he ran on before us, and stopped quite of his own accord at the gate leading to our house; although it was a semi-detached one in a long row, and he came back from the opposite end of the street to that at which he had left it.

A few weeks before we left London, the poor doggie was sent to the farm at our country home, as the bailiff was very fond of him, and promised to take great care of him. Our house at the sea-side was not ready for us, and we spent two or three months at different places before going to live there. Then we heard that, very soon after Roy had left us, he had been taken to the village on a fair-day, and had never been seen since. But a few days afterwards we were told that an advertise-

ment of a "found" collie was appearing every day in a certain paper, and it turned out to be ours. This time. Roy had followed the cart of a strange farmer instead of our bailiff's, and was still with him at his farm not very He was at once sent for, but my father said that we should not be able to keep him unless his temper was very much improved by his country visit. He had not been many hours in the house before everyone acknowledged him to be a "reformed character." He had quite recovered his gentleness, and also his health and appetite. But I think that he must have been nearly starved by the people who had been keeping him, for he was miserably thin and weak. But he was very happy to be with his "little mistress" again. I was alone with him that evening. as all the rest went out, and we two enjoyed ourselves I talked to him about his adventures, and he sat with his front paws on my lap, licking my face whenever he had a chance, and evidently meaning to tell me about them, and how much he had been longing to see me again.

A few good meals and walks by the sea brought back his strength, and he was soon as pretty and merry as ever. Living in a town was, in some respects, quite a new experience for Roy; for in London he had never walked in the crowded streets, but only through two or three very quiet ones on his way to the Gardens. Almost the first time that we took him out he made a dreadful mis-

take, which I suppose I must mention in giving an honest account of his life and doings. There was in the town a butcher's shop which I have often thought must seem to the canine part of the population to be arranged entirely for their convenience; for the counter stood just within easy reach of their noses, scarcely two feet from the ground, and was always covered with tempting little pieces of meat. As we passed it that morning, but on the opposite side of the street, we saw Roy, to our dismay, coolly take a large bullock's heart and come across to us, pursued by the butcher's man with cries of vengeance. The poor dog, perhaps warned by his conscience, dropped his prize on the pavement before us; and the man taking it up and wiping it, walked calmly back, intending, as it seemed, to replace it on his counter. But we could not let him do this after it had been in the dog's mouth, and paid him the price of the heart. As it would have been a bad lesson for Roy to allow him to enjoy his stolen property, it was given to Carlo, who was frisking about somewhere near; and we walked on, the poor culprit giving a wistful glance at the delicious meal he had hoped to enjoy. Carlo no doubt appreciated the bullock's heart, but did not look at it in the light of a meal, for we had scarcely gone half-a-dozen steps, when he appeared before us, licking his lips, and looking with eager expectation at his master, as though asking whether he had a few more such dainty morsels in his pocket.

We had great difficulty at first in keeping Roy out of the way of the carts and carriages in the streets, for he had seldom met with any before, and seemed to think there was no danger to fear from them. He would insist on walking in the road unless continually called back to the pavement, and behaved as though he expected everybody and everything to get out of his way, until he at last learnt, by sad experience, that he was not such an important personage as he had imagined. As he was once standing in the middle of the street, with his pretty head leaning gracefully to one side and his feathery tail waving over his back, with the express intention, I believe, of being admired by the passers-by, a dog-cart drove quickly up behind him. did not see his danger until it was too late to call him, and turned away. I heard one loud, sharp howl of pain, and then my poor doggie crawled to my feet and lay there moaning and yelping miserably, evidently in great suffering. I was very much afraid that one of his legs was broken, but the maid who was with me fetched a fly, and with a good deal of help he managed to creep into it, and lay, during the drive home, quite still and without a sound. Getting out again was rather a difficult business, but to my great relief he could just walk from the gate to the house, which showed that no bones were broken. poor Roy suffered a great deal for his carelessness, and for several days we were afraid that he had received some fatal internal injury; as he lay for hours without moving or

eating, and when he did get up he would stand perfectly still, and no amount of coaxing would induce him to tie down again: every movement seemed to be dreadfully painful. At last he gradually got better, but his cure was a long process. He had, however, learnt a lesson which he never forgot, and after that day took care to keep on the pavement in the town, or, if he had to cross the street, to look round and see that the road was clear.

Up to this time I had never taken much pains about Roy's education, but now I began to teach him to understand a great many sentences that were used in speaking to him and telling him what to do. He did not require much teaching, but soon understood nearly everything I said to him, and became perfectly obedient without being in the least cringing or timid. If he was skipping about the hall in wild delight at the sight of us with our hats on, when we were starting for a walk, one word was enough to make him walk quietly back to the kitchen, where he spent a great part of his day; or lie down on a rug at the foot of the stairs and watch us go out with a rather mournful but resigned look in his soft brown eyes.

When Roy first made the acquaintance of all the dogs in the town, he was naturally inclined to fight some of them who did not welcome him in a friendly manner, and he had two or three little skirmishes; but I soon taught him that I did not approve of this conduct, and made him stay close to me when any of his enemies were in sight. His indifference to their insulting behaviour soon pacified them, and in a few months we could allow him to "talk" to as many as he liked during his walks without any fear of There was only one dog—an ugly, brindled, his fighting. short-haired creature, a good deal larger and stronger than Roy-who, when they met, invariably tried to provoke a quarrel by walking round and round him with deep, low growls, ending sometimes in a snarl and an attack. morning, as Roy was coming up the street with Henry, his enemy overtook and followed him, behaving in his usual provoking manner. Roy held his head and tail very erect, and evidently longed to revenge himself on the great bully, though he just managed to reach the house door without turning on him; but when he looked round and saw that the dog had followed him through the gate into his own garden, it was too much for his patience, and in another second they were struggling together in close Fortunately for Roy, whose strength was not fight. nearly equal to that of his adversary, and who would very likely have been killed by the savage creature, a policeman, who knew the other dog's warlike propensities, happened to come up, and gave him a blow that nearly stunned him, and before he had time to collect his senses for another attack Roy was taken away. I knew nothing of the quarrel until it was over, and then, after examining my dog carefully, and to my great surprise and relief not finding so much as a scratch on him, gave him a little

scolding for attacking his enemy, though it was the first time he had done so, and that only after much provocation. He knew what I meant, and begged my pardon in his own pretty way, but did not seem as happy and merry as he generally was after being forgiven for any misdeed. Three or four days later, as I was petting him, he gave a'little yelp when I patted his neck which made me feel sure that he must have received some injury; so I looked near the place I had touched, and found a large open wound deep down among the long hair of his throat. My father said that it was very dangerous after having been left so long, without any care, in a place where the poor dog could not lick it himself; and that it had better be washed with salt-and water, mixed with a little brandy. Roy stood perfectly still while the place was being bathed excepting that he trembled with the pain; he knew quite well that we were doing it for his good, and showed his gratitude by licking my face whenever he could reach it. Though a painful cure, it proved to be a successful one: and in a week or two he was quite well again. This was the last time that Roy ever fought, for though he was some months later attacked and bitten by a dog of about half his own size, he did it no injury, and showed no resentment when they afterwards met.

Roy was wonderfully quick at learning tricks, and quite confuted the proverb about teaching them to an old dog, unless he was *the* exception to the rule; for he

was never taught one till he was in his sixth year, and after that learnt them more and more easily as his age increased. I had only to say such a thing as "Give me your paw" three or four times, and show him how to do it, to make him understand perfectly what I meant. soon began to give his paw whenever he wanted anything—not throwing it wildly up into the air as Carlo did. but putting it gently upon the hand or arm of the person from whom he expected a favour, and looking up at the same time with such a beseeching expression that it was almost impossible to refuse him what he wished. times he would keep me stroking him for a quarter of an hour together by begging me in this way to go on whenever I stopped. But the occasion on which he exerted all his powers of entreaty and persuasion was when he had any reason to expect a scolding, and wanted to beg If he had done anything wrong unknown to himself off. me, I only had to enquire what his offence had been, for his sad expression and quiet manner always betrayed him. He seldom had much of a scolding, for as soon as I said in a grave voice: "Roy, what have you done?" (it was generally such a crime as lying on some snug sofa that had been forbidden him) he came and sat before me with his face turned away, as a child might do who considered that it was listening to a half-unmerited reproof. until I had finished my harangue and asked, "Will you promise never to do it again?" Then the brown eves

were fixed persuasively on my face, saying "Yes" as plainly as possible; and first one paw, then the other, laid gently on my knee, until our heads were on a level with each other, by which time his irresistible coaxing had generally won his forgiveness; and with an affectionate little lick in the air near my face, Roy sprang away, sometimes with a joyful bark, and danced about round me in his grateful delight.

Though not as forgetful of himself and his wants as Carlo, he was not a greedy dog: when he was gnawing away happily at a bone I could snatch it from him without his showing any anger; he would only ask me to give it back by stroking my arm with his paw. If a plate of meat or anything else was put down to the fire to keep warm for one of us who was late for a meal, there was never the least difficulty about leaving Roy alone in the room with it; for he would lie for an hour together with his nose on the fender, and never think of touching it. It was amusing to see the grave way in which, if I offered him a dish, saying, "Roy, it's Friday; that's meat, and that's fish," he would eat the fish and leave the meat untouched, as though from habit quite indifferent to the forbidden food.

He would hold a piece of biscuit on his nose for any length of time, and throw it up and then catch it in his mouth, or brush it off with his paw as he was told; and if I put a plate of bones or any food before him, merely saying "No!" he pricked up his ears and kept his eyes fixed on my face, watching eagerly for permission to eat it. I taught him to hold a piece of sugar in his mouth without eating it, and to drop it into my hand when I said, "Give it to me." I do not think there are many dogs who could go through that trial. But perhaps the most wonderful of Roy's performances was one which I did not teach him, and never made him go through: he would sit on his haunches with his nose pointing straight upwards, and a piece of biscuit on the very tip; and when the expected "Yes!" was pronounced, he let the well-earned prize slip into his mouth, and swallowed it.

I sometimes clapped my hands instead of saying "Yes!" to release him from his trials of patience. He watched eagerly as I held them out ready to give the signal; but I could close them a dozen times running, as quickly as possible, without his moving his nose so much as a hair's breadth until the sharp clap came.

Roy never lost his Scotch taste for oat-cake, and always liked that better than any other food. Sometimes for a treat I bought him a piece when we were out in the town, and he never passed a confectioner's shop without licking his lips and looking first at the window, then at me. After oatmeal his favourite dainties were cheese and cake. If a piece of each was held at an equal distance from his nose, he sniffed first at one, then the other, and ended by taking the cake—as he preferred the cheese, and

always left the best of anything that he was eating until the last.

Roy was quite aware of his own beauty, and was not a little vain of it; but his mistress never told him that vanity was unbecoming in a dog, and he would hardly have understood her good advice on that point as he did on most other matters. I sometimes took him to a fulllength mirror to see what he would think of his own re-I do not know whether animals are supposed to see things reflected as we do, but I should think, from all the cats and dogs on whom I have tried the experiment, that they only see them indistinctly. Roy would certainly have shown great displeasure if he had met another dog walking in his mistress's bedroom, but he went quietly up to the glass and did not seem to notice anything until I excited him by pointing at it and asking him what it was. Then he seemed uncomfortable and perplexed, and would not look at his own reflection unless I told him to do so, though he often stared at mine for a minute or two without moving. But he certainly saw his own to a certain extent, for he sometimes gave a little growl and sniffed about in the air, or looked behind the mirror as though seeking a strange dog; and if I held a piece of biscuit against the glass for him, he drew back when the reflection also advanced its nose, to allow the other to take it, as he would have done if it had been Carlo or any other dog.

When he went up to the drawing-room to see visitors, he jumped or rather stepped up into the nearest armchair, and sat there in the most graceful manner, with his head on one side, receiving their caresses and admiration as a matter of course. He was always quite pleased to find guests in the drawing-room, and made friends with them at once; but he had a great objection to strangers in the kitchen, and showed it by barking furiously at them. Roy went even further than this in his ideas of gentility, for he would often come into the dining-room with a very good appetite, after having just refused food in the kitchen.

One morning as I came down to breakfast, I heard one of the servants scolding him for not eating a piece of bread that she had given him; and there he stood looking dismally at it, as if he had been asked to eat a piece of wood. I said nothing, but picked up the bread and went to the dining-room, where I pretended to cut the loaf, and threw him the old crust. He pounced upon it and ate it, as though it had been a most delicious morsel.

Roy was very clean and neat in his ways, and used to wash his face like a cat. If he got his nose black by sniffing among the coals, or came in very muddy from a walk, he was quite ashamed of himself till he was clean again. I think he must sometimes have swallowed several ounces of mud in his eagerness to lick it off his

hair; and yet Roy disliked nothing so much as a bath. Soon after he came to us, one of the servants was asked to wash him, as he had made his chest very black; but he retreated under a table at the sight of the soap and water, and when she tried to get him out, growled at her. was the only time in his life that he showed bad temper to anyone in the house, and I do not think that the provocation was repeated for several years. However, when he was getting old, and was not so careful about his own appearance. I used often to make him submit to a scrubbing and drenching. He really hated it, though he made no resistance, but stood, looking the picture of patient despair, refusing to be comforted by the daintiest tit-bits, even letting them drop if I put them into his mouth. But his pride and delight when the operation was over equalled his dejection during the process: it was quite amusing to see how he followed me upstairs and down, as if feeling confident that he was fit to be in any room or any company.

I never knew an animal that had such an idea of luxury; he was always finding some new place to sleep in, for he was allowed the range of the greater part of the house at night. At one time his choice was a little packing-case that stood in the corner of an attic, into which he could just squeeze himself by curling up his legs and tail under his body; then he would spend a few nights on the kitchen table, for which he always had a scolding in the

morning from his mistress; another time he took it into his head that the only comfortable corner in the house was at the very end of a long cupboard under the pantry dresser, which was nearly full of empty wine-bottles, in this way getting into disgrace with the parlour-maid. She did not much mind his wrapping himself in the carpet that lay before her fireplace (which he often did when there had been a fire there during the day), not even when she found him one morning with his nose poking out of the roll of carpet, surrounded by the remnants of a newspaper that was to have been used for lighting the fire, but which he had torn into hundreds of minute pieces, though it took her some time to sweep them up into her dust-pan. But when he was found one morning lying on a clean cotton dress, which he had carefully dragged out of the clothes-basket, I had to march him off to the scene of his crime when I came downstairs, and threaten him with fearful consequences if it was ever repeated. However. after this he did get into disgrace with his best friend, the housekeeper, by nestling himself in the basket of clean things that had just returned from the wash. Another time he managed to untie the sack of clothes that was just going to the laundress, and, spreading them about the room, made himself a snug bed of them. But the time when Roy best showed his ingenuity in finding himself a warm and comfortable sleeping-place was in his old age, when he had become rather stiff and rheumatic. Between the front hall and the back part of the house ran a long narrow lobby, with a kind of sideboard at the end of it on which lay some large soft carriage-rugs. At first he tried jumping on the top of them, to spend the night there; but this would not do for him, because just above there was a window which was nearly always a little open at night. So he had to look out for some way of sheltering his poor old bones from the cold draught, and soon found a very clever one. He drew one of the rugs to the ground, and then (how he did it without killing himself is a wonder) pulled one of the heavy spare leaves of the diningtable, that stood against the wall, down across the passage. which was so narrow that it rested against the opposite side at a sufficient height from the floor to allow of Roy's lying beneath it on the rug. The first morning that he was discovered in his comfortable little house, it was supposed that he had accidentally thrown down the great leaf while pulling at the rug, though from their position this was very unlikely; and he was not shut out from the lobby, nor even scolded on account of the deep dent that his improvised roof had made in its fall on the opposite But next morning he was found to have done exactly the same thing, this time disfiguring the wall very much; so for the future the swing door leading from the back passage into the lobby was always fixed at night, and poor Roy had to seek a resting-place in some other part of the house.

There was something about Roy which made him never look awkward, or out of place. He was fond of sitting on the table, and though he was such a large dog he was so pretty and gentle that it seemed quite natural for him to be there among our books and work. boxes. His favourite seat was an American arm-chair in which he could just curl himself round comfortably: perhaps he knew how pretty he looked in it, with his front paws crossed, and his long tail hanging down before him. We had a great many portraits taken of Roy, but none did him justice. The best was done by a travelling photographer, who spent about three hours in the garden taking him and Carlo in different positions, until at last they were so tired of being pulled about and told to lie down and get up, that they both refused to keep their eyes open any longer, and went fast asleep.

Poor Roy once had a great fright. My brother and I went into a stuffed-bird shop, and seeing a large black retriever lying near the counter we left Roy outside, for fear the dog should not like him to come into his house. While we were getting what we wanted, the black dog lay without moving, with his eyes fixed on us. We spoke to him, but he paid no attention to us, and then we found out that it was a stuffed one; so we thought it would be fun to see whether Roy would be taken in as we had been, and opened the door. In he marched, with ears pricked up and tail erect (for though he never fought

now, he always put on a very dignified air when "talking" with other dogs), and walked straight up to the retriever; but in an instant he started back to the other side of the shop, and stood there, looking at the thing in a very shy and crestfallen manner. No doubt the poor dog felt much as we should if we thought we had seen a ghost, both on this occasion and on another, when he uttered a low growl at the sight of a roasted hare on the dinner-table.

I have heard of several dogs who knew the difference between Sundays and other days, but could scarcely believe it to be true until I saw it verified in Roy. On a week-day, the sight of any of us dressed for a walk sent him capering about with joy; but on Sunday, when we came downstairs dressed to go to church, he took no notice of us, and let us go without showing the least excitement. He also seemed to know when to expect our return if we had been away from home. Once, when we had all been absent for about a week, the servants told us that he knew, as well as any of them, that we were coming back that evening, and lay the whole afternoon in the hall, eagerly watching the door.

Perhaps the best of my beautiful Roy's many good qualities was the good-natured way in which he put up with rival pets. Though Carlo did not follow the example of his predecessor, Pilot, and show him a mortal enmity, he never seemed to care for him at all. Roy did not return his indifference, but made a great many advances,

which would have ended in close friendship if the other had been willing. They never met without his running up to his companion and kissing him in a most affectionate way; but Carlo seldom returned the salute, and seemed glad when it was over. It was quite amusing to see them indoors together. If Carlo settled down in a comfortable corner, and Roy went to lie near him, he immediately got up and walked off to the other side of the room. Sometimes, on purpose to see what he would do, his master told him to stay where he was; the poor old dog would not disobey, but did his best to keep out of Roy's way by sitting on his haunches against the wall and poking his chin straight up in the air, as though drawing back from some unpleasant object. We could never understand Carlo's conduct, unless it was that he considered Roy to be a "soft," pampered creature, unworthy of the company of a good honest watch-dog; at the same time he did not hesitate to take very unfair advantage of Roy's gentleness and forbearance. If we gave them each a dog-biscuit, he had not the least scruple about taking all that he could get of Roy's, after having hidden his own safely in some corner; though he would keep guard over dry old bones that he had not been able to eat, and growl at Roy if he went near them. The two dogs often stopped on their way down the street at the shop of our butcher, who was very fond of them, and generally gave them a nice little meal of raw meat-a

luxury in which they were never indulged at home. Their different ways of asking and receiving the donation were very characteristic. Carlo stood with his head on one side, his eyes gleaming with eagerness, his heavy tail swinging round and round, and, not seldom, his two great paws on the clean deal counter that was in front of the shop; while Roy waved his tail gently to and fro, and looked up with patient expectation at their benefactor as he took his knife and proceeded to cut some little pieces for them. Carlo generally managed to catch what was thrown to him in his open mouth, and then, before Roy had time to pick up his share from the pavement, snatched it away and stood ready for the next piece. With most dogs this would have ended in a quarrel, but Roy showed no resentment, and was quite contented if he now and then came in for a small portion of the windfall. I daresay Carlo thought him a great coward to let himself be robbed so easily; but he was mistaken, for with dogs, as with human beings, gentleness nearly always goes with courage, and I never knew a dog less cowardly than Roy.

All the other animals seemed to know by instinct how kind and gentle he was. Bobby, when he came indoors, used to hop about on the floor quite close to his paws, and my tame linnet was not in the least afraid of him, but would pick seeds off his nose or paw as fearlessly as from our hands. One morning Roy saw me fix a lump of sugar between the wires for Linny, and thought he

would like to have a piece of it; so he went and sat by the cage and watched the bird pecking at it for a few minutes; then gently put up his paw to the cage, asking to be given some, though he could have taken it quite easily if he had wished. Linny did not understand the entreaty, but my pretty doggie had the sugar all the same, and the little bird was obliged to wait while I fetched it another bit. We had several kittens who made great friends with Rov. One little tabby, Softa (who owed her name to having been given us just after the Sultan of Turkey had been murdered by the Softas—it was also an allusion to her fine silky coat), used to follow him about the room pulling his tail, or hang on to his nose by all her claws as he lay before the fire, and seemed to be doing her best to imitate her namesakes in her conduct to her royal companion. But she generally finished by going to sleep nestled in his long fur with her nose under his ear. often had fine games together in the garden. When Roy was walking with us, Softa would suddenly dart out from some hiding-place in the bushes, dash up against his side, and disappear again before he had time to look round. Sometimes, when we were at one end of the long green terrace we saw Softa at the other, crouching down ready for a spring, and knew what she wanted. "Catch Kitty, Roy!" and off he dashed, looking as though he certainly meant to make an end of his little tormentor; but no, he jumped high over the tiny creature, then she over him,

and away scampered the mischievous little thing as if she was dreadfully afraid of the great dog, though three minutes later she would be dancing after him on her hind legs and catching at his tail with her claws. I have seldom seen a prettier sight than the games Roy used to have with a handsome young retriever dog who lived down by the sea: they bounded about, sprang towards each other, curveted, drew back, changed places, and seemed to be going through a whole quadrille, with far more graceful and light motions than those of any lady—and how they enjoyed it!

But to return to the kittens. Another little Turk from whom Roy had a good deal to endure was Bashi, so named after the Bashi-Bazouks, with whose name the world then was ringing. One day I went into the kitchen, where she and Roy were lying together before the fire, with the long bone of a chicken's leg in my The sight of such a dainty morsel soon brought hand. them both to their feet. I let Roy bite a piece off the end of it, and then offered it to Bashi, who took much longer gnawing off her portion. He sat over her for a minute or two, with his ears pricked up and his eyes gleaming; but at last, thinking she had had her share, he lifted his paw and stroked her small head very gently two or three times. I let him have another piece, and then Bashi; and again, after waiting a few minutes, the dear, gentle doggie coaxed her to let him have his turn. They went on in this way till the bone was quite finished. Bashi died before she was quite full-grown, and Roy had no playfellow for several months; then Henry thought he should like to have another kitten, and we asked some people who kept a large fruit-shop in the town whether they could let us have one the next time their handsome Persian cat had a family; they agreed, and a few weeks afterwards we were invited into a little room behind the shop to see four kittens which had been born three days before. There were two tabby and two black; we chose one of the former, then an ugly, blind, mis-shapen little creature, like any other kitten of three days old. After this we went every two or three weeks to see how they were going on, and noticed to our great joy that their hair was much longer and rougher than that of most kittens, so that we hoped they were going to be like their mother. When ours was six weeks old, it was, we all agreed, without exception, the prettiest kitten we had ever seen. Such bright blue eyes it had! they looked like two large forget-me-nots against the soft grey-and-Poor little Kitty was one morning taken away in the middle of a fine romp she was having with the others in the fender, and brought to her new home in a basket. mewing all the time as though her tiny heart would break at leaving them and her mother; but as soon as she was taken out of the basket, and put down with a saucer of milk by the fire, she made herself perfectly at home, and never

showed the least sign of wishing to have any more to do with But not so the poor mother. When we went to tell the possessors of the kittens that ours was well and happy, they said that the poor old cat had been inconsolable for several days, neglecting her other kittens, and hunting in every corner among the fruit and vegetables with piteous "mews" for her lost favourite. Meanwhile Kitty was making new friends and playfellows. She was taken to see Roy for the first time when he was having his dinner. The small grey thing, eight inches long, stood still a little way off, arched its back, and tried hard to spit defiantly at its new and alarming acquaintance. Roy was told, and most likely saw for himself, that his advances would not be favourably received, and, when he had finished his dinner, lay down by the fire for a nap. he was not long left in peace. Half an hour afterwards the kitten was lying between his front paws, biting them and patting his nose as coolly as possible. Poor Roy was quite unhappy for several days after this kitten came to us, as we all petted it so much, and he felt too old and stiff to play with such a merry little creature. But he was always quite gentle with her, and only drew his paw slowly away when she hurt it very much, which of course made her dart at it in greater delight. Kitty was very fond of Henry, her particular master. When she was about four months, old he went from home for two or three weeks. For several days after he left, I noticed

that whenever I went into a room, Kitty ran up at the sound of the opening door, and, after looking eagerly round it, turned away and stared wildly up or down the stairs as though in search of something or somebody. If she was lying asleep and heard a step outside the door, she always started up and seemed to be listening attentively. I did not pay much attention to this, until the housekeeper one day said: "The Kitten is pining for its master; it has scarcely touched any food since he left, and mopes for hours by itself in his bedroom." knew what poor Kitty had been looking for, and did my best to comfort her. At first she refused to be consoled. and we were quite afraid that she would starve herself and pine away before her master's return; but she gradually regained her spirits and appetite, and by the time he came back had almost ceased to miss him.

Unfortunately, as Kitty grew up she lost her rough Persian coat, and turned out to be a common short-haired cat, only remarkable for the sleekness of her handsome tabby fur. As long as she was quite young, she was a nice, good-tempered little thing, and a great pet with all of us. She had a particularly pretty way of curling herself up in one of our work-boxes—after settling its contents with her paw, so as to make what she thought a comfortable bed—and purring herself to sleep. But as she grew up her temper became so uncertain—chiefly, I believe, owing to the persecutions of a certain puppy who was

afterwards her companion—that she received from a visitor the uncomplimentary name of "Fiend," which she still retains.

Roy was very jealous of my affection, and was often a little hurt when I paid much attention to other animals: but the only time that he ever showed his feelings strongly was when Henry came home for the holidays, after having been away for a whole year. We noticed that almost as soon as he arrived Roy disappeared. He was very fond of the dog, and wanted to see him; but we called and called in vain: no Roy came. He was not in any of the sitting-rooms, so I went to the kitchen, and found him lying there under the table, looking gloomy and dejected. I told him to come out, but he would not move, which was very unlike his usual perfect obedience. It was no use begging or ordering him to come to the dining-room. where Henry was having his dinner, until he came himself, and petted and coaxed the poor dog. We could none of us understand this very unusual conduct, until a year later, when he behaved in exactly the same way on my brother's next return from school. Poor Roy saw that he was quite forgotten in the first minutes of welcome, and could not bear to stay and feel that even his little mistress neglected him.

The only small animals that had anything to fear from Roy were the mice. He was a capital mouser, and a much more merciful one than the cats, as he killed them with one snap. Nothing excited him so much as a mouse-hunt, and he never looked more beautiful than when on the watch for one, with his eyes glistening, his ears pricked up, his bushy tail waving slowly over his back, and stamping his feet with impatience if he lost sight of his prey. But though so fond of mice, he would never eat them; so they were made over to Jack the raven, who considered them to be very dainty morsels. Several of our kittens caught their first mouse under his direction and with his help.

As Roy grew older he lost a good deal of his freshness and beauty; at least, we thought so, though he was still very much admired by strangers and by our friends. But he always retained his graceful and winning manners, and he and his little mistress became fonder of each other every day.

When he was about eleven years old his health and strength began to fail very fast. He seemed to grow visibly older every day, and with his health his spirits failed. He would lie asleep nearly all day long, only brightening up when there was the excitement of a walk or a mouse-hunt to rouse him; and though he enjoyed his walks still, a short one was quite enough to tire him out for the rest of the day.

Some friends who had a family of fine Mount St. Bernard dogs, had to our great delight promised to give us a puppy next time they had a litter; and we had often

wondered what Roy and Carlo would think of such an addition to the "ménagerie," as we called the whole lot of our pets for short. But now we began to think that before the puppy arrived Roy would be dead, and so be spared the vexation of having such a rival. However. unfortunately for him, just at this time the puppy was born, and about six weeks later came to us. From that day my poor doggie had very little peace. Hector was a dear merry little thing, brimming over with fun and good-nature, and very fond of Roy; but he could not understand that the poor old dog was not as fond of rough play and as ready to defend himself as his little brothers and sisters had been; and so he treated him like a great plaything; pulling his hair, biting his ears, barking at him, tugging at his tail, and teasing and annoying him in every possible way, and all with impunity, for Roy was much too kind and gentle to think of resenting it. though he really suffered a great deal. He did at last desert the kitchen, where he had formerly spent a great part of the day, and followed me more closely than ever wherever I went, as if for protection from his persecutor; but it was impossible to keep them always apart, and directly the puppy caught sight of Roy, he would fly at his ears, sometimes biting them severely, or hang on to him by a mouthful of hair as he trotted along. If we slapped and scolded Hector, he ran away and sat in a corner, looking very dejected; but in three minutes he renewed the

attack; and so my poor collie led a miserable life for some weeks.

At last after a great deal of consultation as to what could be done to put an end to this state of things, it was settled that it would be best for old Roy to go and spend his last days in peace at the farm belonging to our country home with his friend the bailiff. We were going down there ourselves soon, and should be able to see that he was comfortable in his new home. I could never have given in to this arrangement, had it not been that I had hopes that when away from his tormentor, Roy might regain his health, and after a few months of country life be much better; by that time Hector would be old enough to behave sensibly.

I often wondered, as I talked to him about it, and took him with me to buy a new collar, whether he knew what was really going to happen to him; for I had been told by a friend that her dog had done so under the same circumstances, and had suddenly disappeared on the evening before the day appointed for his departure, and never been seen again. Poor Roy was very quiet and melancholy, but he had been so for a long time, and I comforted myself by thinking that he was unconscious of our approaching separation. He was to go a few days before us with our housekeeper, who was going down to get the house into order.

It was rather a strange thing which we had often noticed,

that if Roy was hurt he would give a sharp yelp, or when he was very unhappy, bark in a complaining way, but that he never under any circumstances howled as other dogs do when they are sad or in pain. On the morning that was to be his last at home, as the housekeeper was making her final arrangements in the kitchen before starting, she suddenly heard just outside the door in the passage, one long mournful howl (just as if the poor dog's heart were breaking, she afterwards told me), and ran out to see what it could be. There was no one there but my Roy lying on the mat at the foot of the back stairs, and one of the servants who had heard the cry and come to see what was the matter. My mother, who was in quite another part of the house, also heard it. I did not know of this until several weeks later, or that, the evening before, he had wandered by himself all over the house as though taking leave of it, even going into some little bed-rooms at the end of a long passage at the top of the house, which he had rarely, if ever, entered before. Since I heard this I have had little doubt that the poor doggie had a presentiment of more coming events than we knew of at the time.

Henry and I went to the station with Roy, and asked the guard to take great care of him during the journey. He promised, and I saw my pet comfortably settled in the man's own box. I took one last peep at him before the train started; he stood looking at me through the window with his ears pricked up, and a perplexed, inquiring look in his eyes; but I now turned away, for I had not known how difficult it would be to part with my beautiful pet, even with the hope of seeing him again so soon.

A few days later we all followed him, and my first thought on arriving was to run over to the farm and see Roy. I found him tied to the wheel of a waggon in the cart-shed. At the sight of a visitor in the distance he barked, then stood still staring at me; and when I came within reach of his chain sprang up and nearly choked himself, and smothered me in his delight. pet," I said to him, "you are much better already; I daresay you will get quite well again down here." But when his first excitement was over, I could see a great change for the worse in him, even since I had parted from him three days before. After petting him a little, and begging the bailiff and his wife to be very kind to him, I had to go back. It was hard to leave my doggie looking sadly and longingly after me (but without any attempt to follow me, for I had said, "Stay there, Roy," and even in his miserable anxiety he would not disobey); but I thought it would not do to take him, as if he once found out where we were, he would always be running to the house after we had gone away.

The next morning Henry and I went to fetch him for a walk. I waited some way off, as the fields were very damp, and when they came in sight, called "Roy!" He started, gave a short bark of delight, and galloped toward me faster than his legs had carried him for many a month past. He was in such raptures at being with me once more that all my resolution gave way, and I felt that as long as he lived I could not again give him the pain of parting from his little mistress.

Instead of going any further we turned towards the house. Roy trotted on merrily, looking about inquisitively, as he recognized the old paths and shrubberies. He ran indoors, greeted everyone in his pretty, gentle way -and then suddenly changed. From that minute nothing cheered him up or gave him the least pleasure. For three days he crawled about the house after me, or lay at my feet; but he did not care even for my petting, and would scarcely touch any food. After that, he lay all day long on a mat which I put for him in a corner of the kitchen; or, when he could creep in unnoticed, on a soft long-haired rug under the writing-table in the drawing-room. Poor Roy was failing fast; he grew thinner and weaker every day, and, if possible, more melancholy. We all felt that the time was come for saying good-bye. I kissed his pretty, soft head for the last time, and asked him to give me his paw. After a good deal of coaxing he lifted it slowly an inch or two from the ground and put it into my hand. As he raised his head to give my face a little lick, there was such a miserable, painful expression

in his beautiful eyes, that I felt it would be cruel to let him linger on any longer.

An hour later my father told me that my pet was out of his misery.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AUSTRALIAN PARAKEETS.

NE day when we were out in the town we saw a man drawing a hand-cart, on which he had a great many cages full of foreign birds. There were several Australian grass-parakeets, little things very like love-birds, bright green with black stripes across their feathers, long darkblue tails, and yellow faces. Bertha admired them very much; so my father bought her a pair of them. I noticed that when, as the man was showing them to us, he lifted up the cage, saying: "They are very playful, Sir," they began running after each other as fast as they could, dodging over and under the lower perches. I think they must have done this at a sign from him, as they stopped as soon as he put them down, and never played in that way after we had them.

The cage in which they were bought was so small that they broke the long feathers in their tails against the wires, so we put them into a very large parrot's cage, which they liked very much, as they had plenty of room to exercise their wings in it. Every day in the summer time the cage was put out on to the lawn, much to the surprise of the sparrows and other birds that came to feed at the window, who hopped round it looking very much perplexed at the sight of such strange specimens of their own tribe. In doing this, we ran a great risk of losing them, though we did not know it at the time. when my mother was alone in the room with them, writing her letters, she heard a scuffling noise in the cage, and looking up saw "Husbandy" with his head and shoulders through the wires, and "Wifey" standing on the perch behind, pushing him and doing all she In another minute he could to help him through. was out and flying against the window, which fortunately happened to be shut. We caught him and put him back, but soon found that this was quite useless trouble, for in a few minutes he was out again, and after sitting on the back of a chair near the cage and chattering to his Wifey for a short time, he flew on to the top of it, and squeezing himself through, dropped on to the highest perch. He was very fond of his mate and never went far from the cage when he came out, even clinging to it as we carried it from room to room. So we did not mind his being free in the winter time when windows and doors were shut. But I think Wifey became jealous of his freedom, for she used to run about in a very unquiet

way when he left her alone, and before long took to pecking his feet as he climbed about the wires. At last she found out, or he showed her, the way to escape, and one morning they were both found flying about in the kitchen, where they slept for warmth. As they were likely to be troublesome, now that there was nothing to keep them near the cage, the poor little birds had to be put back into their old one, where they looked very dull and discontented for some weeks. But when Bertha's birthday came my father gave her a nice new cage, that was made on purpose for them. It was very large, but the wires were near enough together to prevent their getting out, and the wood-work was bound with tin, so that they could not peck at it. The little parrots were delighted with their new home, and directly they were put into it flew on to one of the perches and sat shricking with pleasure and flapping their wings, as though to make up for their long confinement.

They were affectionate, and would sit for a quarter of an hour together, warbling softly and kissing each other. Husbandy would bring up food from some hidden recess for his mate; sometimes when he was out of the cage alone, he fed her in this way through the wires. But Wifey had rather a hot temper, and very often the little birds had a regular squabble; then they flapped their wings and pecked at each other with angry and defiant screams. Soon after they were put into the new cage, a

cause of dissension arose. Husbandy, while pecking about on the floor, saw his own reflection in the bright tin binding, and thought that it was another parakeet. He was delighted with his discovery, and spent a whole morning walking up and down trying to kiss his new friend, warbling and offering it food. Wifey meanwhile sat on the perch above, leaning down to see what he was about, and every now and then scolding him furiously. But naughty Husbandy paid no attention to her, until he was quite sure that his offers of friendship to his new acquaintance were in vain, and that he must content himself with his rather cross but loving little Wifey.

Bertha, though she was so successful with most birds, never managed to make the parakeets any tamer than they were when we first had them, and they did not care at all for us. So we gave them to a friend who was very fond of parrots, and had a great gift of taming them and making them like her. They are, I believe, still alive, but I do not know whether their present mistress has succeeded in winning their affection.

CHAPTER XIII.

JACK.

JACK was the raven, who lived for several years in our aviary in the country. He was a very large and handsome bird of his kind, with glossy black plumage.

The first night that poor Jack came he could not fly up on to the perches, as his wings had just been clipped very closely, and had to content himself with roosting on a large cabbage that was lying on the ground. He soon became quite at home, and learnt, or rather taught himself to bark like Carlo and Roy, and to call their names and He was always very much pleased if we went his own. into the aviary, and hopped up to us, looking as if he would like to have a game. If we held out a stick to him he clung so firmly to it by his beak, that we could lift him up and swing him about in the air. Sometimes he would catch hold of my dress and nearly pull me down, for he was very strong; and he was rather fond of pecking at our feet. Once he succeeded in cutting quite through the gardener's thick leather boot with his great

sharp beak. So we were rather afraid of him, and did not do much towards making him tame.

When we went away, Jack was sent to a friend of my father's, who admired him very much and offered to take care of him until we returned home. His new master had a nice large cage made for him outside the wall of his stable, and now and then let him out for a walk in the garden. Jack's wings never recovered their clipping, so he could not fly more than a few feet from the ground; but one day he managed to climb up a very tall Scotch fir that stood near his cage, and sat for hours at the top of it, barking triumphantly and mocking his master and the coachman, who stood below calling him and trying to entice him to come down. At last hunger overcame his love of liberty, and he had to descend in search of food.

About a year later, when we went to live at the sea-side, Jack was sent to us in a hamper. He made a most dreadful screeching while he was being unpacked and taken out of it, and tried to bite my father's hands. But he soon found that he was among old friends, and became quiet and contented. Indeed he was quite pleased to see my father again, for he had always been fond of him.

We put Jack into a large courtyard at the back of the house that had a high wall all round it, and a little empty outhouse where he could go for shelter. For some days he seemed contented, and hopped about, looking inquisitively into every corner; but he soon discovered that by making a succession of jumps, from the dust-bin on to the roof of the potato-house, from that on to the wall, and down again by an old vew tree that stood on the other side, he could widen his field of discovery, which he accordingly did. When we found that he was gone, and could not see him anywhere in the garden, we gave him up for lost, as we thought there was no chance of anyone knowing whose bird he was, for we had only been in the town for a few weeks, and Jack for a still shorter time. But, to our surprise, he was brought back three days afterwards by a farmer who had found him walking about his fields more than a mile away, and had somehow discovered to whom he belonged. As it would not do for Jack to repeat such an excursion, he was shut up on his return in a large kind of cupboard that was meant for empty wine bottles and was made of narrow boards, set at some distance from each other, so as to let in plenty of air. But it was a very dark cage and stood in a dull corner of the vard, where poor Tack seldom saw anyone to whom he could talk. So my father had a nice large house made for him of wire netting, roofed with wood. It was built in the garden against the outside of the court-vard wall. We often came past him here, and took him fruit and vegetables out of the garden. Directly any of us came in sight he began calling "Jack! Jack!" unless a stranger was with us: then he never spoke a word. He soon learnt to say a great many things, and when quite alone would talk to himself for half-an-hour together, especially early in the summer mornings, before anyone was about. One of our bed-room windows looked on to the court, and we often heard him chattering away to himself. He was very fond of calling the dogs names, and would sometimes issue a whole list of commands to Roy: "Roy! Roy! come here! Collie! come here directly! come, Roy!" and then he would imitate the call that one makes to dogs, best expressed by the word "Jick"; to all of which, Roy, if he was present, fortunately for Jack, paid no attention; for if the dogs did sniff round his cage for remnants of his raw meat, he flapped his wings and shrieked violently at them, as though in great terror.

It was strange that Jack did not always imitate the words that he heard the most frequently; for instance, I very seldom called Roy "Collie," yet that was always one of the raven's favourite words. When Roy was dead, it seemed very strange to hear Jack call, "Collie, Collie, Roy!" when we went into the garden, as though he missed his old friend and wanted to inquire what had become of him.

One day I was standing near Jack's cage, though hidden from it by some high shrubs, when I suddenly heard someone just behind me laughing violently in a loud, gruff voice. I turned round in great surprise: no one was in sight, but still the laughing went on. At last I thought

the sound seemed to come from Jack's corner; I peeped round, and there was the raven sitting upon his perch, looking as solemn and demure as ever, but roaring with laughter: "Ha! ha! ha!" as though he were thoroughly enjoying the most amusing joke. It was impossible to hear him without joining in his seeming merriment, especially if at the same time you could see the great black creature peering at you with his bright, cunning eyes. One summer he learnt to cuckoo, and imitated the bird perfectly. did not repeat everything in the same tone, but said each word or sentence in the voice of the person from whom he learned or copied it. He called Carlo in a deep man's voice so exactly like my father's that it was impossible to know whether it was he or the bird speaking from a little distance, "Roy" and "Collie," he said in my voice, and his barking was such a good imitation of Roy's, that one could not be told from the other. He barked whenever the door-bell rang, from hearing Roy do so frequently. But the most remarkable thing was, that when Jack thought himself alone and unnoticed he often went through a whole conversation in the distinct voices and modulation of tone of different persons; but as these conversations were imitated from people walking on a path which ran along outside the wall at the top of the garden, they were always carried on in a low voice, and as Jack was shy of talking much before anyone, we could never hear how far he pronounced the words. But I should think he

only copied the sounds of the dialogue, as he was not likely to hear the same twice over.

If any of us spoke to Jack he listened attentively, turning his head slowly from side to side, as though taking in every word we said and deeply considering it; but if his master said anything to him, Jack immediately twisted his head completely round, so that his chin was exactly over his forehead, and rolled his eyes in an alarming manner.

About two years after he came back to us, the gentleman who had taken care of him while we were in London came to see us. Jack recognized him at once, and held down his head to have his neck scratched, which he never did for anyone else. He was always delighted if we went to talk to him, or give him anything to eat, and would, I believe, have become very tame and affectionate if anyone had devoted themselves to the task of taming him. But he pecked at our fingers when we gave him food through the wires, and we could never let him out of his cage, for fear of his escaping. So he never got any farther than having a friendly understanding with all of us, scarcely preferring one to the other.

Jack is still alive and well, and if it is true that ravens often reach the age of one hundred years, he may live to have his history written by another master or mistress.

CHAPTER XIV.

HECTOR.

E often had arguments with our friends as to the relative merits as pets of kittens and puppies. We all liked grown-up dogs much better than cats, but thought that a kitten could never be equalled by any other young animal. However, I almost, if not quite, changed my mind, when we received a present of a Mount St. Bernard dog which had just reached the mature age of six weeks.

We saw Hector for the first time when he was only three weeks old, in company with his nine brothers and sisters; and a funny little set they were—about the size of cats, but almost as broad as they were long, tumbling helplessly about over each other, biting very amiably at everything that came in their way, and looking mildly up at us with their blue-grey eyes. But their father was a champion dog, and their mother very well bred, though not large of her kind, and their long pedigree contained the names of several other champions and a great many prize dogs; so great things were expected of the puppies,

and we all looked forward anxiously to the time when ours would be old enough to leave his mother and come to us. This, it was decided, would not be for two or three weeks. Meanwhile, eight of the little family went to a large show, where they gained a prize and were at once all sold. Hector did not go, as he was already fixed on as our dog, and those who went to the show were to be taken away by the people who bought them. We were rather sorry at first that he had not done his part in earning the prize, but heard soon afterwards that the others seemed to have suffered from the three days' confinement in the bad air.

When the appointed time came, the puppy was packed into a hamper and taken to the station, which Henry, his future master, was going to pass on his way down from London. He resented this treatment, and set up a concert of squeaks and yelps which lasted with short intervals until he reached his new home. When the lid of the basket was taken off, it disclosed a fat, woolly, grey-and-white creature, nearly twice the size that it had been when we last saw it, sitting upon its haunches and looking very helpless and melancholy. The little dog was lifted out, and after giving himself a shake, proceeded to toddle about, falling down almost at every other step, for though his paws were so thick and large that they looked quite out of proportion, they were too weak and gristly to bear the weight of his great fat body. We were rather anxious

about the welcome he might receive from the other members of the "menagerie." Roy met Henry as he came in at the door, and began to show his usual joy at the return of any of his masters or mistresses; but, as we were afraid he might become too much excited and frighten the poor little dog, when he found out that the hamper contained something alive, he had been taken away. But now he was called in, and at the sight of him the melancholy-looking puppy brightened up and toddled to his new friend, with his tail wagging merrily. Roy seemed equally pleased at making his acquaintance, and kissed the fat, waddling creature condescendingly, little guessing, poor doggie! how much he would have to suffer from it. I have before told how they got on together; it is the only thing I do not like to think of in connection with Hector, for in all other respects he was such a nice, gentle little thing.

Carlo from the first took no more notice of him than if he had been a fly, and poor "pupsie" soon gave up his attempts to play with the great black monster, who seemed so much more inclined to frisk about than his other victim, Roy. And once when he bit Carlo's ear in his play, the old dog turned upon him with such a warning snarl that he was more careful afterwards about taking liberties with him.

Kitty did not take so easily to Hector as she had done to either of the other dogs. He had a large, heavy way of moving, which inspired her with great dread; and for weeks after he came she spat and growled at him whenever he went near her, only daring to box his ears when she thought herself out of his reach on a chair or on the top of the coal-scuttle. The puppy took it all for play, and made little dashes at her, squatting down and inviting her with merry yelps to attack him. If she ran away he followed as fast as he could, and when he overtook her, frightened her so dreadfully that someone generally had to go to the rescue and scold Hector away.

Between his attacks on Kitty and his constant worrying of the other dogs, the poor puppy was continually getting into trouble. He was so full of fun that he could not keep it all to himself; but of course we had to prevent our old favourites suffering from it as much as possible. We used to have fine games with him in the garden; he would race round and round a plantation, dodging cleverly backwards and forwards, and nearly always succeeded in catching us, when he was very proud He had a great taste for buttons and trimof himself. mings of every sort, and did a good deal of damage to our clothes, besides tearing a few door-mats to pieces. But there was never the least malice in his playfulness, and he was so fond of us all that we forgave him a great deal of mischief.

He had always shown a great liking to certain buckles and bows that were on some slippers belonging to his

friend and favourite, the housekeeper. One morning he managed to get up all by himself to her bedroom, where he found the objects of his ambition lying under a chair. No one knew of this little expedition until some hours later, when the housekeeper went upstairs to fetch some-Hector scrambled up before her as fast as he could, and, running into her room, came back to meet her, carrying triumphantly in his mouth some odds and ends of black silk bows. But this was when he was three months old, and had a little strength in his great legs. For the first few weeks he even had a good deal of difficulty in getting up three steps that led from the courtvard into the garden; and coming back again, invariably tumbled head over heels down the last two. When he wished to move from one place to another, he was obliged to go at a very slow walk, or a quick gallop, for he could not otherwise keep his balance. At this time his coat was mostly of a greyish buff colour, shaded into black, but that part soon changed into a rich red-brown. He had all the markings required in a prize-dog-white paws and front legs, white tip to his nose and tail, white chest, and the "blaze," or tuft of white hair, at the back of his neck. He was one of the short-haired kind, which is, I believe, considered the handsomest.

Hector spent the greater part of his day in the kitchen, and slept in a large empty laundry. One day, when he was still quite a small toddling thing of about two months old, he was given a saucer of milk under the kitchen dresser. He did not consider this a comfortable diningroom, and, after lapping up some of the milk, he lifted the saucer in his mouth and carried it to the other side of the room, where he put it down, without spilling it, on the carpet before the fire, and finished its contents. He was possessed of a very strong will, especially in matters of eating and drinking, and at first we had great difficulty with him. The directions of his former mistress were, that he was to have a very little meat, and while he was quite young, two meals a day of biscuit or meal boiled in milk. But Hector from the very first turned up his nose at everything but meat; and as to green vegetables, which were supposed to be quite necessary to his health, he carefully separated them from the other food, and pushed them out of his mouth with his long tongue. I sometimes undertook the difficult office of making him swallow his breakfast of oatmeal porridge. Roy used to come and sit by us, his eyes glistening and his mouth watering at the sight of the large basin of his favourite food. the gentle doggie never thought of taking an atom of it, unless I told him he might. The best way to tempt Hector to eat his porridge was to let him see how much Roy enjoyed it. When I allowed them to eat some together out of my hand, one licked away as hard as the other, their tongues and noses meeting in my palm. We were afraid of stopping the puppy's growth by giving him

food that he did not like; and so, for some months, he ate little else but meat, of which he devoured enormous quantities. He would eat enough at one meal to last the two other dogs for several days, and he certainly grew very fat on his favourite fare.

When Hector was about four months old we went away to our old home for a fortnight, and took my poor Roy with us. The puppy was left with one of the servants who remained to take care of the house. I daresay he found it very dull with no companion to tease, and no one to take him for little walks on the cliffs. But he was well taken care of, and by the time we came back, he was aslarge as Roy had been, and a good deal fatter. I naturally returned with rather unfriendly feelings towards Hector, and missed the joyful excitement with which my pet had always welcomed me when I had been absent from home; but I was anxious to see how much the puppy had grown, and went with Bertha and Henry to the back of the house in search of him. He was lying at the top of a long flight of steps, leading from the upper to the lower court; but, directly he caught sight of us, he came toddling down at full speed in raptures at seeing us all again, especially his-I could not help forgiving the dear dog all the sorrow he had caused me and my pet; but after my experience with Roy I determined never again to let any dog become very fond of me, or to care so much for it that when it died I should feel as if I had lost a great friend. About a

week later my mother and the housekeeper came home. It was long after puppy's bed-time, but he had been allowed to stay up to see them. He was extremely sleepy, and after giving his mistress a few affectionate licks as she came in at the door, dropped down asleep on a rug. But presently the housekeeper-who stayed behind to see after the luggage—followed, and at the sound of her voice Hector roused himself. As soon as he saw who it was, he rushed at her with a little gasp of delight, and, springing up with his paws on her shoulders, licked steadily at her face, bonnet, and hair until she was quite bewildered. But, as soon as she managed to shake him off, he was up again, following her about on his hind legs with his paws still on her shoulders, and licking hard, as though he did not know how to express sufficiently his joy at her return; until at last we had to go to the rescue and drag him away by force.

Soon after this the house was very full, and the bedroom that had been the housekeeper's was occupied by a gentleman who was staying with us. Hector had always been used to lie outside the door of his friend's room when she was in it, waiting for her to open it to him, or to go downstairs again; and at first he could not understand the change. The second day that the gentleman was in the house, when he went up to his bedroom, he found Hector lying across the doorway on a nice woolly rug, which he no doubt thought had been placed there for

his convenience. As soon as he saw that the stranger's purpose was to invade the apartment which he considered to belong to his favourite, he thought it was his duty to defend it, and, showing his sharp white teeth, began growling in such a threatening manner that he was left In undisturbed possession, until my mother, hearing her visitor's exclamations of disgust and alarm, went to his relief and called away the faithful guard. Hector, unfortunately, inherited from his mother very weak nerves. The first time that we took him into the road, he was so much frightened by the sight of about a dozen people walking on it, that he ran up the steps of the first house he came to, and sitting down in the doorway with a pitiful little whine, refused to move a step farther. After he had overcome his fear of human beings in general, a poor man walking on his bare feet struck him as something supernatural, and a cow, or a pump done up in straw, was enough to terrify him, when he betrayed his feelings by deep growls and barking, keeping at a safe distance from the object of his terror.

One day he started to walk with Henry to a village eight or nine miles from home. They were to return by train. If Hector wrote his own life, the account of what he saw and felt that day would, I think, be the most sensational part of the book, something like the chapter of a story in which the ghost appears. When they were about half-way, the road crossed the railway by a bridge.

As they reached it a train was coming up, and Henry, forgetting about the puppy, stood still to watch it. make much noise on the open line; but when it passed underneath, rumbling like thunder and puffing up volumes of smoke over the parapets, it was too much for the poor dog's nerves, and with a frightened howl he turned and fled. He ran more than half a mile before his master could persuade him to stop, and then there was great difficulty in getting him to cross the bridge. At last he went by it, but during the rest of his walk continually looked nervously about him on each side of the road, expecting every moment to see such another panting monster rush by. But there was a much greater trial in store for the poor puppy. the station he climbed into the train after his master, little knowing what was going to happen to him. Presently the train moved on. He jumped up with his fore feet on the seat, and stared out of the window without moving for about five minutes, then dived down under it and lay there as if dead, until his master went over to his side to try and console him, whereupon he darted to the opposite corner, and never moved again during the journey. When the train stopped Henry opened the door and called him, but he seemed quite paralyzed with fear. He had to be dragged out, and only came to life again when he found himself safe on firm ground. As soon as he reached the streets, and saw that he was really in his own town again, after all his adventures, he became wild with joy, and so anxious to reach home that his master had to run all the way to keep up with him.

The next time that we took him out he behaved in a very strange way. When we were nearly a mile from home. he suddenly looked up to the top of one of the houses. gave a start, and with his ears laid back and his tail between his legs, slunk over to the other side of the He refused to come back, so we had to follow He looked suspiciously at us, as though he feared we were going to do something he dreaded, casting uneasy glances at the opposite houses, and seemed altogether so much terrified and so miserable, that we felt sure that he had seen something that frightened him at a window, and took him home, hoping that he would forget all about it. But the next day he behaved in exactly the same way, and, instead of enjoying his walk, was perfectly wretched with terror the whole time. It was nearly a week before we found out the cause of his alarm. The poor puppy had caught sight of the smoking chimneys, and taken them for steam-engines, so that he was in continual dread lest the whole row of houses should suddenly move on, causing the horrible noise and motion of which he had lately had such fearful experience. It was several weeks before he quite lost his nervous fear of imagined danger, and even then he shook with fright if he passed within sight of the station and saw a train in the distance.

Whether or no it be true, as a wise man has said, that dogs are "embodied affections," our puppy baby was a model of gentle love. He showed it in one very touching way. His dearest friends, as I have before said, were his young master and the housekeeper, our former nurse, so kind to him and us. The young master was very fond of her, and Henry was her special darling. Hector quite clearly felt how it was between them. If "Oiney" went out, he would look restlessly about for her, and, if possible, get away upstairs to her bedroom. There he would hunt for her slippers, take one most tenderly, and carry it into Henry's room, lay it softly on the bed, lift himself slowly up after it, and laying his head on the shoe, go to sleep. Several times he has been watched doing this, and I once found him standing outside the door, which happened to be shut, with the shoe on the ground before him. "Bo-oo-ing" violently for admission. Who could help loving such a doggie? And so Hector grew up, loved, and, I think too, spoiled by all his masters and mistresses.

Though he was such a fine, healthy dog, he never cared for eating for its own sake, as most dogs do, and time after time he left his dinner of dog-biscuits untouched. It was a very different thing, if anyone chose to sit by him for a quarter of an hour, feeding him with small pieces out of their hand. He then rewarded them for their trouble by apparently enjoying their company and

his dinner equally well. If this attention was refused, the cunning puppy knew how to enforce it. When he came in from his morning walk he was generally chained up for a few hours to an outhouse in the courtyard, where he had plenty of clean straw to lie on, and could see down to the kitchen window. I do not know exactly why it was done; I believe it was supposed to be useful discipline in preparation for the hardships of life. Anyhow, Hector, though he hated it, seemed to think it was the right thing, and always marched straight up to his large kennel, and waited to be chained to it. The two great biscuits that were brought to him at this time did little to comfort him, and he seldom touched them if left to himself. One morning I was so much moved by the despairing way in which he saf there, with his breakfast disregarded by his side, that I went out, and, breaking it all into small pieces, began to feed him. He brightened up, and munched away as though he suddenly felt keen pangs of hunger; and as it was too cold to stay by him while he finished it, I turned to go in a few minutes, when he seemed quite interested in his occupation. looked at me with a reproachful air, sank doggedly down, stretched out his front paws, laid his nose on them, and peeped at me through his half-shut eyes. He could not have said more plainly, "Then I won't touch another morsel; I'll starve." Of course I was back at his side in a moment, and suddenly his appetite returned, and the

hard biscuit went down as though it had been his favourite dainty, bread-and-butter. Once more I left him, when he had quite warmed to his work, and again, as I disappeared down the steps, he went down with his nose between his paws with that irresistible look of reproach and determination to have his own way about it. I wonder whether anyone could have withstood it? His little mistress could not; and two minutes later he lay warm and comfortable before the kitchen fire, with his breakfast beside him, like a little tyrant as he was.

Hector, in common with most of our pets, had numberless names and nicknames—Tomkins, Pupsie, Dolsie, Rumpledust, Rattletrap, Toddler, and Jack, were only a few of them. Everyone called him by whichever came first into their head, and it was no wonder that he did not answer particularly well to any of them. The first of these was given to him in his very early days by my father, from his supposed resemblance to an honest city clerk, who worked hard all day to support his mother and sisters. As he grew older he lost a good deal of that hard-worked, melancholy, patient expression of face, but the name he never lost; and I often wonder what people in the streets must have thought when they heard my father whistling and calling for "Tomkins," who was scampering off in the distance after some delightful playfellow that he had found among the large dog population of the town.

Hector is now only ten months old, and quite a puppy in his manners and character. He has outgrown Carlo, his dear old companion, and almost equals him for good temper and affection. I hope he may live as long, and be as faithful and well-loved a pet.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PONDS AND THEIR INHABITANTS.

I HAVE now finished the history of our pet animals; but before saying good-bye to my readers, I mean to tell them a little about the ways and doings of the wild birds, beasts, and fishes, which we have noticed, chiefly at our country home in Sussex.

There was in our grounds a succession of fish-ponds: first, a rather large one with an island in the middle, and a pentstock, by which the water could be allowed to run under the avenue and some plantations, into another, larger still, with three little islands. From this there was a waterfall into a smaller one, which was separated by a bank and a waterfall from the next; and so on through four others down to the trout-stream, which again widened in the middle of the wood, through which it ran, into a broad sheet of water. They were all well stocked with different kinds of fish,—trout, tench, pike, carp, bream, roach, perch, chub, gold-fish, and eels. Most of them were very good to eat, and when they were wanted for

dinner, we could generally manage to get enough to make a dish; though, of course, the best were the most difficult to catch. We were all very fond of fishing, and thought the excitement of watching the float delightful; but when we had a bite, and succeeded in landing our prize, one of our elders was always called to our assistance; for taking the hook from the fish's mouth seemed such a cruel operation, and we could never believe that it did not hurt them.

One of the smaller ponds was used as a kind of aquatic dust-hole, and always went by the name of the "rubbish pond;" for, whenever any of the others were drained, and the fish taken out, those that were not worth preserving were thrown into it. At one time it was so full that the fish could be almost caught without any bait, for directly anything was thrown into the water, half-a-dozen would swim up to see and taste whether it was good to eat; and when we went round the ponds in the winter-time with cans of food, we could sometimes see them swallow pieces before they reached the bottom. This was very convenient when the herons were in the aviary, as there was never any difficulty in procuring their food.

A small part of the largest pond was separated from the rest by a narrow bank, with a gravel path running along it, which we always called "the isthmus." On the further bank was a fountain, which sprang out of the ground among the ferns and bushes, and played into the water. When this pond was stocked with trout, they used to hear the plashing of the fountain, and leap high up over the bank, which was about four feet broad, to get to it.

The fish had a great many enemies, who lived with them in the water or on the banks.

Once, when my father was walking near a pond in which there were only pike, he saw something struggling and flapping about near the surface of the water, not far from the shore. It looked such an odd shape that he could not imagine what it was, and determined, if possible, to find out. With a long pole he managed to reach the thing, and draw it to the bank, when he found that it was a pike, weighing about three pounds, which had by this time been nearly killed by a frog, that still clung to its head with its claws in the poor fish's eyes, and its elbows stuck firmly into its gills.

Another creature from which the fish suffered a good deal was the water-scorpion, a large, flat, chocolate-coloured beetle. My father, when he was rowing, once found one struggling with a fish of about six times its own size. He captured and separated them, putting the fish on the boards at the bottom of the boat, while he examined the scorpion. When he put it near the fish, though still holding it by its tail, the scorpion threw out its pinchers and clutched at its prey, thus showing how well it deserved its uncomplimentary but popular name of "water-devil."

One summer, when the largest of the ponds was drained, the mud at the bottom was found to be full of fresh-water mussels. They were ugly, lifeless-looking things, something like large whitish-yellow snails, but protected by a double pink-brown oval shell. We had never seen them before, and had no idea how they came there. Bertha thought they would be quite a novelty for her aquarium, and put a pair into it, imagining that they would feed on the invisible insects in the water, as the But next morning, two of her tiny bream had disappeared; the mussels must have sucked them in. and devoured, or rather digested them, for, as far as we could see, they had no mouths, excepting a soft flabby opening, covered with little hairs. My father has watched them do this in the ponds.

It was very amusing to float about in the boat and watch the different creatures that lived in the water. Sometimes shoals of little new-born fish would glide along near the surface like faint, silvery clouds. In the spring-time there were always quantities of caddis worms. They are the larvæ of the may-flies, and move about with their neat little houses, cleverly built out of tiny pieces of wood and straw stuck together, like a minute piece of rock-work, from one to two inches long. On a bright, warm day the water would be studded over with spots of dazzling light; these were the smaller water-spiders, who, when they dive, carry about their provision

of air with them, the bubble looking like a bright ball of quicksilver, when they are below water, and, on reaching the surface, their wet, horny backs twinkling like stars, as the merry little creatures chased each other in the sunlight. The water-boatmen were funny little fellows that skimmed about on the surface, rowing themselves with their long, oar-like legs. The large water-spiders really ran on the water, sometimes so many of them together that it seemed to be quite agitated, as though by a light breeze. In cool, shady corners, we used to find the spawn of the frogs, like long strings of tough gelatine, with a row of black beads run through them. They were twined about the weeds and sticks that hung into the water from the banks. Later on, these would be hundreds of funny little black tadpoles swimming about.

We often caught them, and tried to keep them during their transformation into frogs; but somehow they always came to grief very soon after the change began.

The banks of the ponds had also their inhabitants.

There were a good many pretty, shy coots, that glided silently about, disappearing like lightning beneath the water if they were startled. They generally built among the rushes and reeds at the water's edge; but one Spring we used to see a little mother-coot sitting in her nest on a large water-lily leaf. She had probably placed it in this position in order to secure it against the weasels, who would willingly have made a meal of her eggs.

Some people accuse the water-rats of catching and eating fish; but Wood the naturalist says that it is not so. They are soft, gentle creatures, much less like their namesakes, the common rats, than large, dark dormice. They lived in the banks that were steep and well sheltered by brushwood, and sometimes we saw them from the boat, sitting on their hind legs before their holes, washing their faces like cats, or nibbling the blades of grass that they held between their front paws. I think our father used at one time to share the popular prejudice against them, for he sometimes shot them; and they would sit quietly nibbling while he took his aim.

The land-rats were much more cunning. There were a great many in some old buildings at the back of the house, and they used to come out and play about in the courtyard every night. Sometimes on a moonlight evening my father used to take his gun to a passage window, that looked down into the yard, to shoot some. But this was not so easy; for even when the ground was strewn with corn as a bait for them, the rats kept carefully within the sharply defined line of shadow, where they could scarcely be seen, excepting for an uncertain movement in the shade, and a chance tail that now and then passed the boundary.

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REAL DEAD.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOME COUNTRY ANECDOTES.

NCE when my father was sitting on the beach near Brighton, he noticed, lying among the pebbles, a large piece of chalk, worn into the exact shape of a shoulder-blade of beef. Presently one of the many half-starved dogs who stray about by the sea, and live on the refuse cast up by the water, came wandering along, and suddenly caught sight of the same thing. He ran up, and seized it hungrily; and strange to say, his delusion was not dispelled on nearer acquaintance, for he lay down with the chalk between his paws, and eagerly crunching it, swallowed every atom, as though it had been the most savoury bone.

One night, when we were quite little children, my sisters and I were very much frightened by a great noise in the chimney of our bedroom. It sounded as though some great creature were struggling to get out, and every now and then falling with a heavy flop into the grate. There was a screen before the fire-place, and we could see nothing.

As soon as my father heard of it in the morning, he came and took away the screen, when there fluttered out a beautiful, large sea-gull, all begrimed with soot, and ruffled by its struggles in the narrow chimney. It would have been no use setting the poor thing free so many miles from the sea-shore; so we kept it, and put it into a large bath of water, and hoped that by providing it with worms for food we should be able to keep it alive as a pet. But all our care was, of course, in vain, and the poor bird only lived for a few days.

My father once saw a life-and-death struggle between two apparently very unequal opponents,—a frog and a As he was standing near the cellar window, which was below ground, and protected by an iron grating, he noticed in the area below it a large frog, which, at regular intervals of one or two minutes, leapt from one side of the little enclosure to the other. He looked more closely, and saw that it was each time followed by a blackbeetle, that walked backwards and forwards, not seeming at all discouraged when the frog, every time it reached it, jumped back over its head, and so escaped. It was evidently a trial of strength and perseverance between the two, and my father was anxious to see which would first give in. They went on, however, for such a long time that he grew tired of watching them, and went away. The next morning, as he was again passing, he looked down the area to see what had been the result of the

struggle, and, strange to say, it was still going on; the beetle deliberately hunting its victim, which, whenever they were about to meet, escaped by a great leap to the other side of its prison. Not until that evening did it end: then, the poor frog tired out, and too much exhausted to make any resistance, became the prey of its enemy, and no doubt furnished its meals for many a day.

As there were a good many rats about the out-houses and wood-stacks, professional rat-catchers used to come once or twice a year, with their dogs and ferrets, and were paid according to the number they killed. Once when our gardener was assisting at the work of destruction, he pulled one of the ferrets out of a hole, where it had been killing a brood of young rats. The poor mother, who had probably just returned from an expedition in search of food for her young ones, rushed out after the ferret, ran up the man's leg, on to his shoulder, and down his arm, quite blind to her own danger, and only desirous to reach the object of her vengeance in his hand.

Another, and more pleasing instance of maternal love, was that of the little wild dormouse which the gardener brought to us with her family of six young ones. They were turned out of the handkerchief in which he had carried them, into an empty drawer of my father's writing-table, while a cage was being prepared for them. We all stood round the table watching them, and though the poor little mother must have been dreadfully frightened, in-

stead of making her own escape, which she might easily have done, she scurried about the drawer, gathering all her tiny young ones together under her, evidently feeling comparatively contented when she thought they were hidden, and safe from harm.

Perhaps the prettiest of all the inhabitants of the woods were the squirrels. They looked so free and happy, and so confident of their own safety, running along the boughs of the great oak-trees, or springing lightly from branch to branch. Near the house was an orchard, with rows of filbert and cob-nuts between the apple-trees, which was of course much frequented by them. Sometimes in the autumn we used to see a bright red-brown squirrel, galloping backwards and forwards between the orchard and a small wood which was separated from it by a field, with nuts in his mouth, to be added to his winter store. We once found a great heap of them collected together in a hole underground, ready for the time when their owner should wake up hungry from his long winter sleep.

One spring morning, as Bertha was walking in the wood, she noticed a squirrel, jumping from tree to tree, and running round their trunks in an excited manner. She watched him carefully, and presently saw that he was pursued by a small bird, that made frequent and furious dashes at him. They were so high up that she could not make out what kind of bird it was, but although it was

no larger than a sparrow, the squirrel was evidently trying to escape from its angry assaults. After a time he got among the small branches, quite at the top of a very tall tree, and there the poor little bird left him, and returned to her nest, which my sister was almost sure that he had been robbing; for squirrels are well known to be very fond of a fresh little egg or two for their breakfast.

One day the cat, old Crosspatch, to our horror and indignation, walked into the house with a beautiful goldencrested wren in her mouth. We took it from her, hoping that it might not be too late; but the poor bird dropped stiff and lifeless from her jaws. We all stood round lamenting over its fate, and admiring its bright, unruffled plumage, when suddenly its eyes opened, the soft greengrey wings were spread out, and in a second the goldencrested wren was flying merrily away through the sunshine.

Another time a robin somehow got into the house, and was brought to us by one of the servants, who thought it must have killed itself in its struggles to get out, or else have died of fright. I took it from her, and walked towards the window to examine the poor little thing that lay stiff on my palm; this was just what Bobby wanted, and like the wren, he no sooner saw his chance than he darted away, exulting, no doubt, at the little difficulty he had had in deceiving his captors.

One summer, we noticed that regularly every morning

when the dining-room window was open, a small wasp used to fly in, generally with something in its mouth, and settle on the writing-table. On the side of the table nearest the window, there were only sham drawers; but they had key-holes, and into one of them the wasp always crawled, coming out again in a few minutes, and flying away. But it was sure to come back several times, and occupy itself very busily in the hole. In a few days a little white wall gradually rose up in front of the opening, and at last quite closed it, as though it had been built up with a fine cement. About the same time, several other key-holes in different parts of the house were closed in this manner, and that so effectually, that no key could be introduced into them. We once opened one with a sharppointed instrument, and found inside some fat, green caterpillars. The wasp had laid its eggs inside the little house, and imprisoned the caterpillars to serve as food for its young ones as soon as they were hatched. We often wondered how the caterpillars lived so long, when there was apparently no food provided for them. But I have since read in some book of natural history that the wasp, when carrying them by their necks to their prison, sends them into a kind of stupor, which, fortunately for themselves, lasts until the end of their lives.

There were a great many rabbits in the woods and in the plantations near the house. Very early in the summer mornings, before anyone about the place was stirring, if we looked out of our windows, we were nearly sure to see whole families of them hopping about on the lawn, and playing merrily together like kittens.

One morning in the breeding-time, when my father and mother were walking in an open part of the wood, they saw a hen-pheasant standing in some tall grass, most likely on or near her nest. She saw them, but evidently hoped that they had not caught sight of her, and that she would be able to prevent their doing so. She did not rise or run away, but keeping her eye fixed on them, sank gradually with an almost imperceptible movement into the long grass, until she was at last quite hidden by it.

CHAPTER XVII.

POACHERS.

DO not know whether it is so in other parts of Sussex, but round about us poaching was quite a recognized It seemed to be understood among the occupation. peasantry, that, as long as a man liked to take the risk and danger, he was at liberty to help himself to as much game as he pleased off the neighbouring estates. I believe there was a regular guild of poachers, who had their headquarters at an out-of-the-way country inn, and shared each other's fines and profits. One man was universally known as the king of the poachers, from his many bold and skilful exploits in this capacity. For some years there was almost continually a large staff of labourers at work on our place, as the gardens and grounds were being very much altered. A great proportion of these were known to be professional poachers, especially one family of seven brothers; but they were fine, strong, honest-looking men, and did their work well.

My father did not do much towards preserving the game

on his land, but there were a good many pheasants and partridges about the woods and coppices. The head-gardener acted as gamekeeper, and spent about half his time making the rounds of the woods in search of traps and their setters, often with success. Under his master, he superintended the work that was going on in the grounds, and so became well acquainted with many of the poachers.

One morning, soon after the labourers had assembled for their work, he heard a squeaking which seemed to him strangely like that of young birds, and appeared to issue from the pockets of one of the men. He therefore intimated that he should like to see their contents. His suspicions were soon confirmed; for he found a whole family of young partridges that had just been taken from their nest. The man was summoned, and sentenced to two weeks' imprisonment. At the end of that time he came back and coolly asked my father for employment. It would have been considered very hard if he had been refused, after undergoing the penalty of his offence; so he was sent back to his work.

Another time a man was caught poaching, and fined three pounds. "Oh!" said he, in court, "I can afford that very well; I've had more than sixty birds off Mr. ——'s place this year."

The gardener at last became rather tired of his quarrels with the poachers and trespassers, and most likely sus-

pected that his master disliked the trouble of having them tried, though of course he had to do it when they were brought to him. One day he came to tell my father that he had just captured a man in the wood with a great bag of nuts, which he had been picking. His master asked him where the man was. The gardener replied that he had left him up by the kitchen-garden (quite out of sight of the house); and warned him that if he moved the dog. Pilot, who was left in charge, would fly at him. father at once understood the man's conduct, but walked with him towards the garden, where, of course, Pilot lay fast asleep, and by his side the bag of nuts, which the man had left behind in order to make his retreat more easy. As they approached, and saw the state of things— "The artful fellow," exclaimed the gardener, apparently in great surprise, "he's been and run away!"

One day as this same semi-gamekeeper was walking along the road that ran through our land, a man drove up in a cart, and as he passed, lifted a piece of sacking that disclosed a heap of dead pheasants. "Them be your birds," said he, coolly, "and there's the white un,"—alluding to a very fine silver cock that was known to be in a certain wood of my father's,—and drove on.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOME AGAIN.

SOON after we went to live on the South Coast, we were visited by three sets of travellers on their way northwards from the sea.

One August afternoon my father called us out into the garden to look at a large flight of butterflies high up above They appeared to be snow-white, and we could the trees. see them dancing up and down and glancing in the light as they came towards us from the sea. Presently we were surprised to see several other swarms of them, about the same size, and flying in the same direction. We were behind some high shrubs that hid the sun from us, and so enabled us to watch the butterflies without We now saw countless little round white being blinded. clouds apparently bursting from the sun, and spreading all over the sky. Besides these cloudlets, the whole air was filled with them like a thick fall of snow. We soon found, however, that they were not butterflies, for my father went up on to the grass terrace, to see them better,

and found it covered with clusters of ants of different kinds. Although we only saw them in the light, the whole sky must have been swarming with them. There was one ant-cloud so much denser than the rest, that we all noticed it as it sailed past, like a solid black ball, lit at the edges with the sun. This enormous army of ants must have extended all along the South Coast, for our home was in the east of Sussex, and some friends of ours saw them swarming in Cornwall the same day and hour. As soon as they settled on the ground they began sawing off their own wings.

About a year later there was a real flight of butterflies, something like this. For two days the garden was swarming with them, hundreds on every flower-bed; some sucking honey from the flowers, and the rest fluttering like a grey cloud above them. They were rather small, and of a soft grey-brown with white patches. They swarmed so thickly on the flower-borders, that the "Fiend" lay beside them on the grass, and patted down one after another with her paw. The next day they had all disappeared excepting a few stragglers, and after that we saw no more of them.

Our third set of visitors were of a very superior kind, and made but a short stay. One bright, warm day in the spring, my father went into the garden, and found it resounding with the songs of nightingales. They seemed to be sitting on the shrubs and trees all round, and singing

their very sweetest. After listening for a few minutes he came in to call us; but when we went out all was silent. The nightingales had only been resting for a few minutes after their long flight over the sea, and rejoicing at their safe arrival in their native land. That night they were heard at an inland town about forty miles off; but in the morning they had all flown away again.

THE END.



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